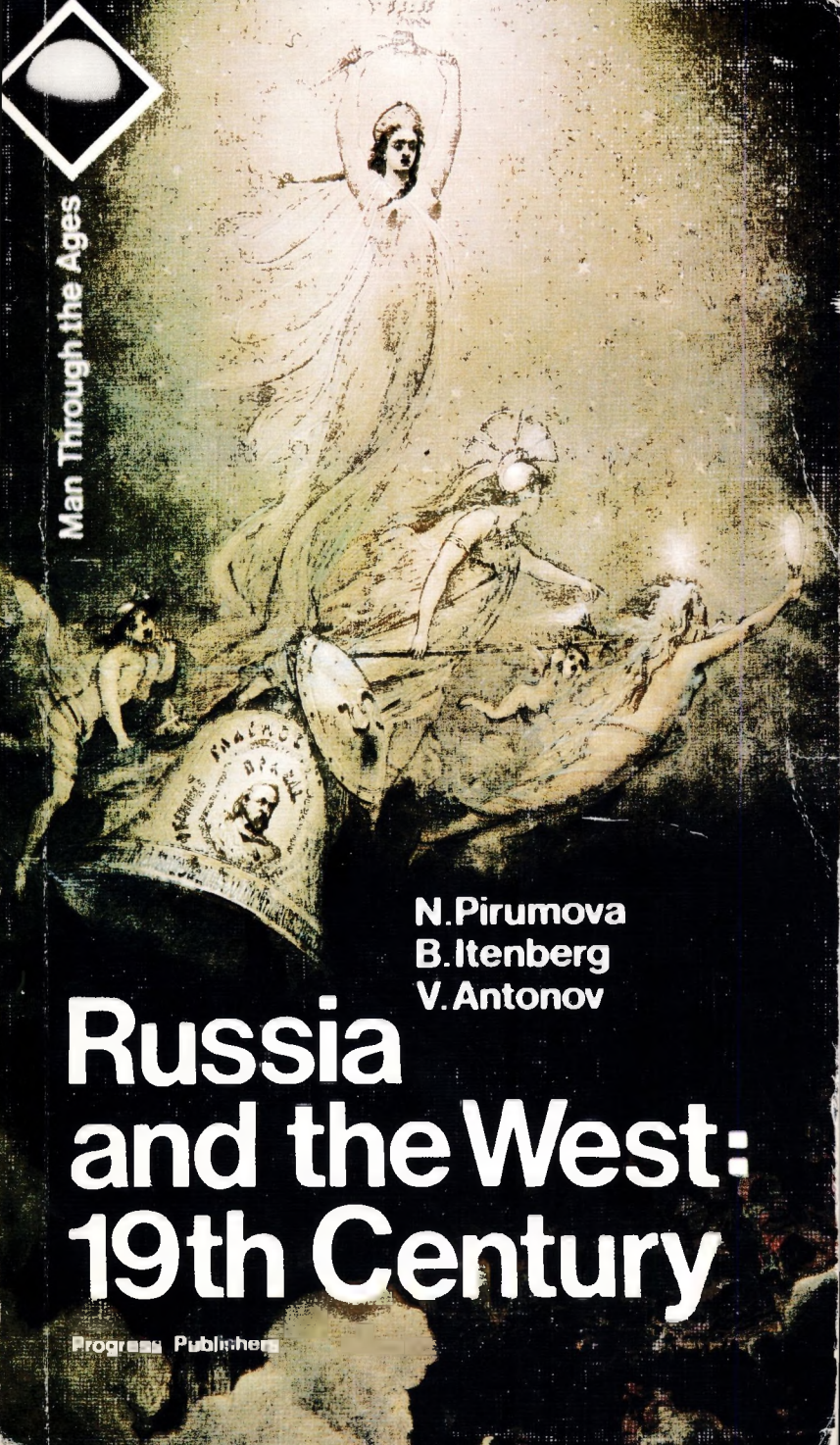




Man Through the Ages



N. Pirumova
B. Itenberg
V. Antonov

Russia and the West: 19th Century

Progress Publishers

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Progress Publishers
Moscow

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On the cover — painting by *Alexei Bogolyubov*, "The Apotheosis of The Bell and The Polar Star". 1860. The Herzen Museum, Moscow. Photograph by *Boris Sosnovsky*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, philosophers of various countries have found themselves faced with the problem of the West and Russia.

The historical fates of Western Europe, which, as far back as the end of the 18th century, had already started down the road of unrestrained capitalism, and of Russia, a country which had experienced centuries-long Tatar domination and had been restricted by the system of serfdom and an autocratic government, are vastly different.

These differences, however, did not mean that a confrontation would be inevitable. Quite the opposite. Tsar Peter I, called the Great (1672-1725), with his programmes of reform, began a process of bringing the two civilisations closer together. And it was these programmes that created the preconditions for the emergence of the problem of the West and Russia. And, 100 years after the death of Peter I, Russian enlightened society fully recognised the need for charting a course for the country's further development. Following the trail that had been blazed by Europe, or embarking upon a new path, one of searching for specifically Russian variants for social development — such was the dilemma which faced the philosophers and politicians of Russia.

A few of these activists, most of whom were brought up on Western literature and philosophy (mostly German), and schooled in the concepts of the Enlightenment period, utopian socialism and the

French Revolution of 1789-94, considered the Western model as a possible variant for Russia as well. Others, taking their impetus from these very same ideological sources, found quite different (as compared to the West) sources in Russian peasant life for constructing an original Russian model.

In all these instances, for Russia the West remained that experimental laboratory where the effectivity of one or another path of social growth might be tested. And for the West, Russia was, for a long time, a frightening riddle. Europe knew Russia only through the latter's military might. Russia's victory over Napoleon, her taking of Paris, the consequent reactionary actions by the Russian government against the liberation movements in Austria-Hungary and Poland: all of these frightened not only individual governments, but, to a certain extent, the societies of these Western European countries as well. It was only in the mid-19th century that the progressive circles in Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland and other Western European countries began to learn about the true nature of the Russian people and the Russian intelligentsia. And it was the deep spirituality of Russian culture which was, in large measure, responsible for this increased understanding. This process of mutual understanding, which began in the 19th century, and has endured many complications, now, conditioned by the common aspirations of the nations of the world, continues to move unfalteringly forward.

Continuing in the tradition of acquainting the West with Russia, this volume presents essays about leading activists of the Russian liberation movement and culture, who were, in one way or another, linked to the social life of Western Europe. The eight separate essays contained herein deal with individuals who were active from the 1840s to the end of the 19th century. Petr Kropotkin is an exception of sorts in that he belongs, in part, to the 20th century by virtue of the fact that he died in 1921.

What is it, then, that, on the one hand, binds these men together and, on the other, separates them? They are differentiated by their individual views, the nature of their revolutionary activity, by the degree of

talent they possessed, by their individual characters and temperaments. And they are united by their sympathies for, and love of the Russian people, by their desire to take an active part in their fate, and by their active attitude towards the problem of the West and Russia, the attitude which is concerned, for all these men, with a specific social stance or path of revolutionary struggle.

Let's pause for a moment to consider the words of one individual who stood at the very centre of this debate. We are speaking about one of Russia's most influential philosophers, Petr Chaadayev. In 1837, looking back on the history of Russia and the West, he posed the rhetorical question as to whether or not "Russia has a clearly expressed nationality ... and would the country, on the other hand, allow its history to be taken away and substituted by the history of Europe? Nothing of the kind," he answered. "Peter the Great found in Russia a blank slate, and with his mighty hand wrote the words 'Europe' and 'the West' upon it."¹ Chaadayev's description of the Russian nation as a 'blank slate' and his critical conception of Russian history which found expression in his "Philosophical Letter" (published in 1836 in the journal *Telescope*) caused a heated debate in society, and served as an impetus, in the final analysis, for the development of two ideological trends: Westernism and Slavophilism. And Chaadayev's ideas continued to develop. Ten years later, in describing this process, Chaadayev wrote: "I think ... the Russia, finding itself faced with a great civilisation, had no other choice than to try and assimilate it... It was inconceivable for us to continue plodding along in our previous history since we were already part and parcel of the new world history. Perhaps it was our mistake, but you must agree, it was a natural mistake. ...Only now is it abundantly clear that we were too unlike the rest of the world to be successful in following its path."²

¹ P. Ya. Chaadayev, *Essays and Letters*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1914, p. 20 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, "Letter to an Unknown Addressee", pp. 265-267.

But Russia's path, according to Chaadayev, was not one which opposed the West, but one which, on the basis of a synthesis of culture and religion, moved mankind forward. "The day will come," asserted Chaadayev, "when we will become the intellectual focus of Europe ... and our future might, based on intellect, will exceed our present might, which is supported by force."¹

Of those philosophers presented here, Herzen and Bakunin come the closest to Chaadayev. But the idea of uniting the nations, while preserving the uniqueness of each of their socio-historical images, was one that was characteristic of other philosophers (included here) as well.²

The reader will be able to understand, on the basis of this book, how one or another idea about Russia's development found its expression among these philosophers.

This volume presents four Russian philosophers who fashioned their own independent philosophical systems. Among them are Alexander Herzen, the founder of "Russian socialism"; Petr Lavrov close to Herzen in his understanding of Narodism (Populism); Mikhail Bakunin, responsible for creating a model of anti-authoritarianism; and Petr Kropotkin, the main theoretician of anarcho-communism.

The reader will also become acquainted with the revolutionary activities of three very different revolutionaries (Hermann Lopatin, Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky and Sergei Nechayev) and with the extraordinary writer and liberal Westerner Ivan Turgenev.

These essays about activists in the Russian liberation movement, who, living for decades at a time in the West, waged the struggle for freedom and social justice together with leading European writers, publicists and revolutionaries, should help the reader better understand not only the historical past, but the traditions of uniting Russian progressive forces with the democratic forces of the West.

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 22-24, Nauka, Moscow, 1935, p. 17 (in Russian).

² S. G. Nechayev is a well-known exception to this formulation.

ALEXANDER HERZEN: "THE STRUGGLE IS MY POETRY"

Early on the morning of 24 August 1852, a middle-aged man with an intelligent, energetic and expressive face stepped off a steamship in Dover harbour. A 13-year-old boy followed close behind him. Thus it was that Alexander Ivanovich Herzen and his son first set foot on English soil. And little did he know then that this country would become his refuge for many years to come.

Even from the very first, Herzen liked London, and two days later, in a letter to an old family friend, Maria Kasparovna Reichel, he wrote: "In London's architecture, in her dimensions and in the squat British houses; in the endless streets and in the figures of the Londoners; in other words: everywhere you see freedom, roast-beef, strength, porter and serious thought."¹ But two months later, Herzen was still tormented by the necessity of having to stay in that very city where he might continue to live, in his own opinion, his ruined life.

"Shall I stay here or move on? Move on, of course! But where? Spain, Brussels, Fribourg... I can't decide."² It seemed to him that each new destination offered him only emptiness and loneliness. And his losses were much too fresh in his mind, and his

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works* in 30 volumes, Moscow, 1959-1964, Vol. XXIV, p. 321 (in Russian).

² *Ibid*, p. 352.

memories much too penetrating. Seated at his dying wife's bedside, he wrote on the eve of his 40th birthday: "Forty years. What a joke ... and everything that is good has already passed. All that remains ahead is the nastiness — but, nothing can be more nasty than the present."¹ But, as it turned out, it could. Herzen now felt himself constantly and completely alone.

"What a strangely severed and half-empty life I lead. You know," he wrote to Maria Reichel, "like when there are big houses which have two or three rooms that are furnished and occupied while the others are empty, with their windows broken and covered with an inch of dust."²

With such a view of the world, it would seem that where one lives would make no difference at all. But, Herzen finally decided to stay in England; England, the place so different from the rest of Europe which was the repository of all his false hopes. London seemed to him the only place in Europe where it was possible to live. "So — I'm going to stay here; I've even found the perfect apartment, far away from everything. All this means that the ebb has begun; the storm which has been raging for almost two years is beginning to quiet down; what is left from all my losses and shipwrecks has washed up on a completely new and strange shore,"³ he wrote to Maria Reichel. Later, in his memoirs *My Past and Thoughts*, he wrote: "I had not meant to stay more than a month in London, but little by little I began to understand that I had absolutely nowhere to go and no reason to go anywhere. Nowhere could I have found the same hermit-like seclusion."⁴ And so Herzen found himself in one of London's "out-of-the-way" places, near Primrose Hill, and separated from the rest of the world by "distance, fog and my own will".

This courageous man had to lose a great deal both in his private and social life to look for solitude.

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works* in 30 volumes, Vol. XXIV, p. 288.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, p. 44.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 354.

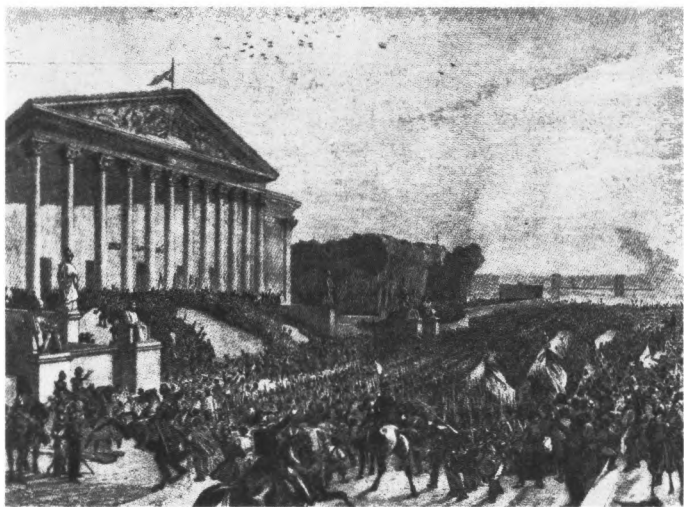
⁴ *My Past and Thoughts. The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, Vol. IV, Chatto & Windus, London, 1925, p. 139.



Alexander Herzen. Lithograph by
Alphonse Leon Noel. 1847

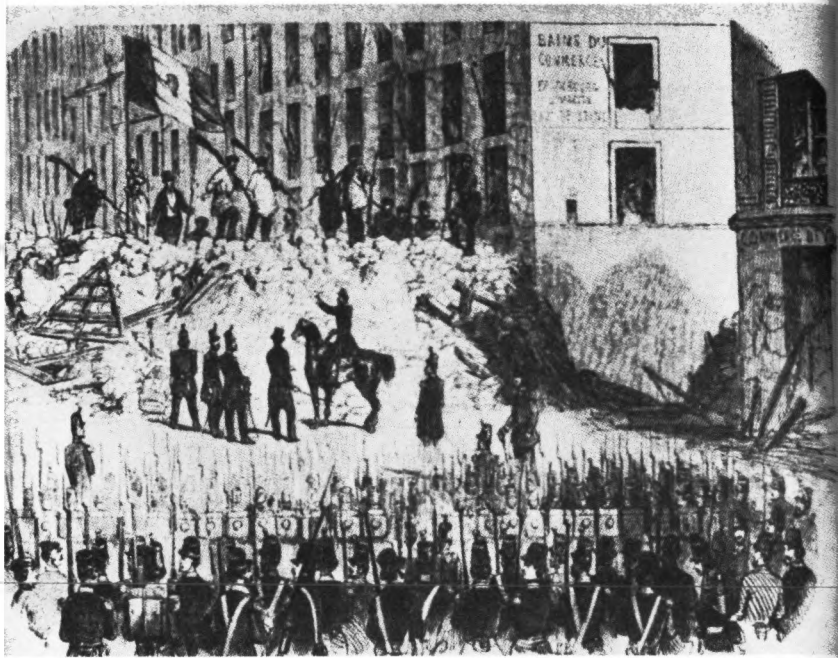


Natalya Herzen and her son
Alexander. Portrait in
water-colours by Kirill Gorbunov.
1841

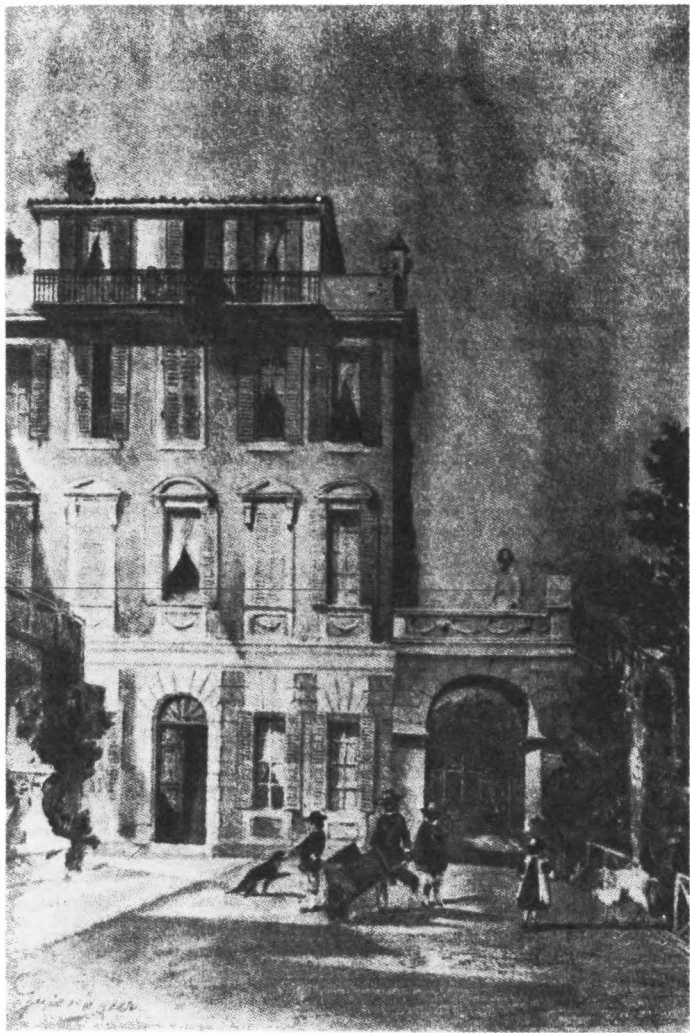


Herzen's house in Moscow
(27 Sivtsev Vrazhek Street)

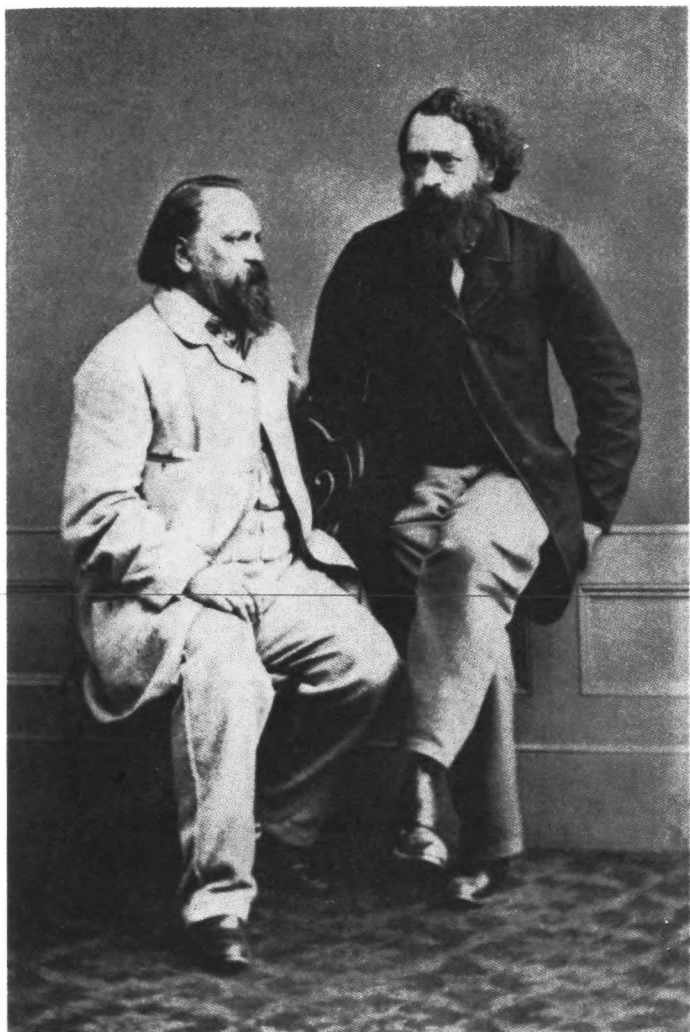
Declaration of the Republic in
Paris, 24 February 1848. From a
19th-century lithograph by
V. Adam and Jules Anroux.



The June Days in Paris, 1848.
Negotiations with the insurgents
at the barricades in the
St. Marten District



Nice. The house where Herzen
lived from 1850 to 1851. A
water-colour by Jacques Guillot.
1850



Alexander Herzen and Nikolai
Ogarev. Photograph. 1850



The Apotheosis of *The Bell* and
The Polar Star. A painting by
Alexei Bogolyubov. 1860



A medal commemorating the first
decade of the Free Russian
Press. 1863

Herzen's house in London.
Photograph. 1850s



Monument to Alexander Herzen
in the cemetery in Nice.
Sculptor: Parmyon Zabello

Not long before this, in March, 1848, he wrote to his friends in Moscow: "I have never believed in life more than I do right now."¹ He said good-bye to Moscow, to his friends in January 1847 when he left with his family to go abroad. And this signalled the end to the brilliant period of his life in Russia. The climax of this period occurred in the 1840s when Herzen occupied his rightful place as one of the leading figures in Moscow's intellectual life.

It was Moscow, as distinct from official, bureaucratic Petersburg, which at that time was the centre of all that was vital, current and advanced. Moscow was the repository for the intellectual stimulus of that period. In describing those conditions that determined this role, Herzen noted "historical significance, geographical location, and the absence of the Tsar".²

The literary salons and varied circles in the "second capital" were seething with endless discussions about the country's path and historical fate. The question of "Russia and the West" was moved to the forefront by the logic of socio-economic development.

Herzen's friends defended a western path of progress while their opponents, the Slavophiles, based themselves on the possibility of a purely Russian solution to the question. But the latter, as well as the former, were all opponents of the institution of serfdom and that estate system which presented an effective barrier to any kind of development.

The Westernizers, whose most brilliant and radical leader was then Herzen, "resembled", according to Pavel Annenkov (a writer and journalist, a contemporary of Herzen) "a militant order of knights which was without a written charter but which knew its members ... and which, nevertheless, ... stood athwart the whole current of contemporary life, keeping it from taking free rein, hated by some and passionately admired by others".³

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, p. 99.

² *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. I, 1924, p. 119.

³ P. V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade. Literary Memoirs*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1968, p. 138.

In this circle Herzen was distinguished not only by his inherent revolutionary character, but his genuine inner freedom, the dialectics of his thought, his ability to get to the heart of any matter, his courage of thought, his nobility and goodness of heart. All of these traits were combined in him with an extraordinarily active and lively personality and a natural and sharp wit. P. V. Annenkov said that "in the early days of my acquaintance with him ... I was stunned and nonplussed by that extraordinary mobile intellect which ranged from one subject to another with inexhaustible wit, brilliance, and incomprehensible rapidity, and which was able to grasp, be it in the case of someone's speech or some simple happening from current life or any abstract idea, the one telling detail that gave it its distinctive shape and vital expression."¹

"For all his staunch, proud, and energetic intellect, ... under the severe exterior of skeptic ... under the camouflage of a humor virtually without scruple and anything but timid, there lived within him a child's heart. He could be awkwardly tender and sensitive."²

Herzen was 35 when he left to go abroad. In those years he had already survived two exiles and an 11-year-long police surveillance; he had married, fathered three children and had managed to write and publish a fair amount. His prose had attracted recognition from his peers and had already taken its rightful place in the history of Russian classical realism; and his philosophical writings entitled *Dilettantism in Science* and *Letters on the Study of Nature* had placed him in the same ranks with the then leaders in Western European scientific thought.

Herzen had no intention of staying abroad for an extended period of time, let alone emigrate. On the contrary, in his letters he often reminded his friends of his plans for a quick return. All the same, Herzen hadn't the slightest suspicion that the Russian government had already been following his actions in Western

¹ P. V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade. Literary Memoirs*, p. 86.

² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

Europe for half a year. On 23 June 1848, the Chief of the Gendarmes, Count Alexei Orlov, informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that "Alexander Herzen, granted permission to travel abroad and currently residing in Paris, has joined a society of democrats... In accordance with the imperial command ... I have the honour ... of instructing our mission in Paris to keep a strict watch on the behaviour of the aforementioned Herzen and to keep me informed as to the nature of the reports you might receive from the mission concerning Herzen's actions."

On the basis of the information received in St. Petersburg, Nicholas I issued the following order: "Impose restrictions on his estate property and demand that he immediately return home." This was in July, 1849, but for almost a year afterwards, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian mission in Paris were unable to establish Herzen's whereabouts. It was only on 20 September, 1850 that the Russian consul in Nice was able to confer upon Herzen the order to return to Russia. Herzen promptly refused to obey it.

On 18 December 1850, the Petersburg Criminal Court decreed: "In accordance with His Imperial Majesty's command and guided by Article 355 of the Code on Criminal and Reformatory Punishments, the defendant Herzen, having been deprived of all rights of status, is henceforth to be recognised as an eternal exile outside the borders of the Russian state." In March, 1851 this decree was confirmed by the Government Council and on the final page of the document, Tsar Nicholas I added in his own hand: "And so it shall be."¹

Herzen's refusal to return to Russia was, as it would seem, natural: should he return, he would find prison and exile waiting for him. But, this was not the whole story, and he himself explained the real reason for his decision: "When in 1849 I became fully acquainted with people and affairs, it was only then I realised that I would be stronger in this world of movement than in the Russian silence. I understood,

¹ A. I. Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. II, Commentary, Moscow, 1932, p. 527 (in Russian).

then, what a place I'll occupy here, and how I would raise the Russian question."¹

We would like to remind the reader as to what was the nature of this "world of movement". Herzen arrived in Europe at the end of 1848, a year of revolutions and struggles for national liberation. In Paris he encountered the end of the reign of Louis Philippe, the king of a financial oligarchy. In government circles arbitrariness ruled and everyone was for sale, beginning with ministers and ending with the delegates to Parliament. The middle layers of the bourgeoisie, and even the intelligentsia, for the most part, were indifferent and cynical. This approach to life was disturbed only by the legal proceedings of 1847 instituted against the ministers accused of taking bribes. That short time that Herzen spent in Paris was sufficient only to allow him to see that upper class and to launch an attack against the "reigning petty bourgeoisie" in his *Letters from Avenue Marigny*.

Prior to this, in October 1847, Herzen left with his family for Italy. They spent some time in Nice, Genoa, in a few other cities and five months in Rome.

Broken up into separate duchies and kingdoms, and oppressed by the yoke of Austria and the feudal power of its rulers, Italy seemed to be "awakening" right in front of Herzen's eyes. "That whirlwind which has stirred up everything, has carried me away as well," he consequently wrote. He was eternally grateful to the fate for landing him in Italy "in such a solemn moment in her life".² The liberation movement had by this time entered a decisive stage. The social activity of the masses had forced the government to adopt reforms. These reforms began in the Papal states and then in the Duchy of Tuscany. But they did not satisfy the people. Stormy street demonstrations which spread quickly to other Italian cities and provinces (first of all to Piedmont) grew. Herzen found Genoa in the grip of demonstrations in support of the reforms. "The enthusiasm of the Italians knew

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 288.

² Alexandre Herzen, *Lettres de France et d'Italie* (1847-1852), Edition des enfants de l'auteur, Genève, 1871, p. 98.

no bounds in its joy; truly, no matter how paltry a reform might be, it bore witness to a certain movement, to the fact that the government had stirred, had come off the sand bank; all this was an official acknowledgement of awakening, *del risorgimento*!"¹ *Risorgimento* was how this period of national liberation and revolutionary struggle which encompassed all of Italy came to be called. The first European Revolution of 1848 began in the Kingdom of The Two Sicilies. And the revolutionary wave grew. Herzen set out to observe free Naples. "People with enthusiasm in their eyes and flashed faces threw themselves all in tears into each other's arms, strangers exchanged congratulations."² On 18 March, Milan revolted against the Austrian authorities and the war of Piedmont was begun. "Events are more and more compressed with each passing day, becoming more energetic, significant. The increased pulse of the peoples beats feverishly, personal opinions and feelings are lost in the greatness of those events at hand," so wrote Herzen in his *Letters from Via del Corso*.³

Herzen spent much time contemplating the vital energies of the Italians. It seemed to him that, at a specific historical stage, a lack of centralisation "temporarily saved as much of Italy as it destroyed", but no foreign might, not even the Catholic Church, could, during the preceding two centuries, destroy those traits inherent in the Italian people. The Italians' inner freedom and the possibility of a "special path" for the development of Italy were what, according to Herzen, bound this country to Russia.

These thoughts found their expression in the *Letters From Via del Corso*, in Herzen's correspondence with friends, but the course of events was really becoming all the more energetic and much became clear only later, almost as an afterthought.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴ The first complete version of *Letters From Via del Corso* along with *Letters from France* came out in 1858. They were published in London under the title *Iskander's Letters from France and Italy*.

During his stay in Rome, a people's militia was formed to aid the residents of Milan. After a four-day long battle, the Austrians abandoned the city. A republic was declared in Venice. "In the morning you run down to Corso to listen to the fantastic news; you believe it or not... I leave Rome in an agitated, but enlivened and expectant state."¹

He was soon on his way to Paris, as the revolution there had already begun. "It was with an unbounded ecstasy that I hastened to Paris, was impossible not to believe in the events which had excited all of Europe — and to which Vienna, Berlin and Milan offered a response." On 5 May he was once again in Paris and, not wasting a moment, wrote himself completely onto a new page in revolutionary history. All the same, his ecstasy was short-lived.

Herzen believed in the revolution in the West, believed that it would bring about freedom for the Russian nation as well, and that it would begin in the homeland of prior revolutions: France. He now found himself in Paris at the height of developments, but was struck by the character of these events. The workers were fighting on the barricades, but the fruits of their victories fell into the hands of the bourgeoisie, those who were protected by bayonets and bullets from the victors. Herzen's *Letters* from France at this time were full of a sense of the impending tragedy of these events. The storm broke on 23 June, with the revolt of the Paris proletariat, the first large-scale battle of the classes. Hails of bullets, which rained into the workers, killed Herzen's belief in the possibility of political revolutions in the West. These "June Days" signalled an end to one period in his life.

Herzen remained in Paris for the rest of 1848 and into the next year. Here, his apartment became a sort of refuge for many exiles from other countries as well as French democrats, who managed to evade prison. It was a meeting place for Germans and Italians, Poles

¹ Alexandre Herzen, *Lettres de France et d'Italie (1847-1852)*, p. 174.

and Rumanians, Hungarians and Serbs. Every day the table in the Herzen house was set for twenty, for those emigrants who, because of a lack of money, wanted to have dinner there. You didn't need a special invitation, no recommendation from a third party. Everyone was heartily welcomed in this house and Herzen used to call these individuals "rescued sailors from other shipwrecks". That Herzen participated in the demonstration of 13 June 1849, which had been organised by the French democrats, was reason enough for the French government to exile Herzen from their country.

And beginning in the summer of 1849 Herzen and his family settled in Switzerland, the traditional refuge for all European emigrants. It was here that he met G. Struve, the leader of the Baden uprising, but the acquaintance went no further than this initial contact. "The German mind, in matters revolutionary," maintained Herzen, "as well as in everything else, accepts the general idea in its unconditional — of course, that is, unreal — significance, and is satisfied with working it out intellectually, imagining that a thing is done when it is understood, and that the fact as easily follows the thought as the meaning of the fact is grasped by the consciousness."¹ The Italian emigration, however, provoked entirely different thoughts and emotions. In Geneva and the following two years in Nice (which at that time was part of the Kingdom of Sardinia), he became more closely involved with many of the leaders of the Italian revolutionary movement.

The figure of Guiseppe Mazzini had attracted Herzen since 1843. "A great and saintly individual, a fiery nature," he wrote in his diary at that time.² Their meeting in Italy never occurred.

After "Young Italy", Mazzini's underground organisation, formed in the 1830s, was crushed, he had lived abroad. After returning to his homeland in April of 1848, Mazzini immediately joined the fight which Herzen only observed from afar. One last

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. III, 1924, pp. 89-90.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 321.

heroic attempt to renew the fight took place after the Austrian authorities put down the revolution in Milan, when Herzen had already left Italy. An uprising in Rome set Pius IX to flight and in March, 1849, the Republic of Rome was declared, headed by the triumvirate of Mazzini, Aurelio Saffi and Carlo Armellini. Three months later, under the pressure of European-wide reaction, the republic fell and Mazzini once again found himself an emigrant. But, he still remained "in power". "The governments rightly feared him. His star," Herzen noted, "was on the rise". Herzen's acquaintance with Mazzini came about on the initiative of the latter. It occurred in Geneva where Mazzini immediately offered Herzen the chance to collaborate on the newspaper *L'Italia del Popolo*. And Herzen, in turn, offered Mazzini and his colleagues participation in *Voix du Peuple* (The People's Voice), a newspaper Herzen had recently founded with Pierre Joseph Proudhon. Herzen, writing about Mazzini, said, "An active, concentrated intelligence sparkled in his melancholy eyes; there was an infinity of persistence and strength of will in them and in the lines on his brow. All his features showed traces of long years of anxiety, of sleepless nights, of past storms, of powerful passions, or rather of one powerful passion, and also some element of fanaticism — perhaps of asceticism".¹

These close and friendly relations between the two revolutionaries continued throughout the following years. But, in spite of the attraction for the "greatest political thinker of all such individuals of our time", in spite of all his respect for Mazzini's convictions, Herzen understood, from the very beginning of their acquaintance, that there existed a point beyond which "he [Mazzini] was a retrograde".²

Herzen passionately affirmed "the end of the political revolutions and the rise of a new *Weltanschauung*" which was based on the idea of a complete social reconstruction. It was natural then that Mazzini, with his fanatic loyalty to the idea of freeing his

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. III, p. 68.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, p. 188.

country and making it into a republic, would seem to him to be a "noble individual, but not a progressive one". Mazzini, for his part, could not accept not only Herzen's social doctrine, but the latter's assertion of a lack of a foundation for social progress in the West. In their commentary to Herzen's article "Russia", the publishers of *L'Italia del Popolo* wrote that while they agreed with the author's opinion that the vocation of the great Russian nation, unspoiled by civilisation, was to play a significant role in affecting European events, they were unable to accept his accusations that the nations of Western Europe were powerless, which are contained in the article.

All the same, divergences of opinion in regards to theory did not prevent Herzen's works from being propagandised among Italian publishers and certainly did not prevent the two revolutionaries from working together.

Herzen cultivated similar friendly contacts with other members of *Risorgimento* as well: Felice Orsini, Giacomo de Medici, Maurizio Quadrio, Antonio Mordini, Carlo Pisacane and Enrico Cosenz. Orsini was one of those who had been "nurtured on his [Dante] sinister poetry" and on the "malignant wisdom of Machiavelli". And it would seem that such ideas would hardly complement Herzen's artlessness, candour and breadth. Perhaps it was for this reason that Herzen wrote about the variability in their friendship.¹ But Orsini's attempt to assassinate Napoleon III and his death on the guillotine in 1858 shook Herzen deeply. "What outbursts, what heroic examples, there are still: Pianori,² Orsini, Pisacane! I do not think that by the death of one man a country could be raised from such degradation as France has fallen into now... I only mean to speak here of the way in which it was actually carried out. These men overwhelm one with the grandeur of their tragic poetry, their terrible strength, and silence all blame and criticism. I know no instance of greater heroism, among either the Greeks or

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. X, pp. 74-76.

² Giovanni Pianori attempted to assassinate Napoleon III in 1855 and was subsequently executed.

the Romans, among the martyrs of Christianity or of the Reformation!"¹

The noble countenance of Carlo Pisacane runs through Herzen's publicistic writings and personal correspondence, even ten years after the former's death. The chief of staff of the Republic of Rome, a publicist, the publisher of an underground newspaper in Genoa, the author of a series of works which left an unmistakable mark on the history of social thought not only in Italy, Pisacane was chosen to lead an expedition organised by Mazzini, which was supposed to land in the Kingdom of Naples and stir up a rebellion there. On 25 June 1857, Pisacane set off by ship for the island of Ponza with a small (21 men) detachment. There he freed the political prisoners held on the island and, with its ranks swelled already to 300, the detachment landed near Capri. There the detachment found itself surrounded and was defeated. Pisacane himself was shot. The deaths of these rebels became the basis for popular legend. The poet Luigi Mercantini told the story in a ballad which Herzen published in 1864 in *The Bell* and in his *My Past and Thoughts*. The final line of the ballad echoed over and over again: "They were 300, young and strong ... and they all perished".

In that same issue of *The Bell*, Herzen also published his article "N. G. Chernyshevsky", to which the following editorial note was appended: "Dedicated to Chernyshevsky, Mikhailov and all our friends who took their places at the pillory, who wear shackles and who are labouring in penal servitude.

"Less than eight years had passed since the hired killers of the Neapolitan king had executed the young hero Pisacane on that very shore where he had made his daring landing. His name was still taboo. Almost secretly, while sitting at her spindle, a young weaver would sing in a whisper under her breath about the *bel Capitano* and his three hundred...

"After Pisacane, another 'madman' made a similar landing on another shore² ... and free Naples raises

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. III, pp. 69, 70.

² Garibaldi landed on 20 August, 1860 in the south of Italy and on 7 September captured Naples.

a monument to Pisacane on that place where his blood was spilled. This monument is to tell every sailor from afar, what kind of people the country produced during the reign of the Bourbons, how they fell for their nation and how the freed citizens raised monuments to them.”¹

This outstanding example of Herzen's publicistic writings, which in and of itself stands as a monument of propaganda for the ideas of a revolutionary brotherhood between Russia and Italy and for the ideas of inevitability of the defeat of “all Bourbons”, also speaks to the fact that Herzen was constantly conscious of the Italian movement and its heroes.

In a letter to his friend Ogarev in December 1867, Herzen returns to this question once again: “...Orsini, Pisacane ... these memories are terrifying, noble and sad.”²

Of all these individuals, Marc Aurelio Saffi was the one most close to Herzen in spirit. “Saffi had the purest and most candid nature that I have met in a man not Russian.” Saffi was the Minister of Internal Affairs for the first republican government in Rome, a member of the “triumvirate” (together with Mazzini and Armellini), a participant in the fight for Rome where he was under constant fire until the very end (many times Saffi was subjected to the very extremes of revolutionary struggle) and, moreover, a writer. It was their love for Giacomo Leopardi's poetry that finally brought them closer. After a long conversation on this subject with the usually taciturn Saffi, Herzen began to understand more about this individual and later wrote: “When men are in sympathy, in the finer shades, they need not speak of many things...”³

Herzen often had recourse to comparisons between the Italians and the Russians. “The educated Italian”, he mused in *My Past and Thoughts*, “is developed of his own accord by life, by his passions, by the books that have happened to come into his hands, and so attains to understanding of one sort or another. This

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p. 236.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 245.

³ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. III, pp. 83, 86.

is why there are gaps, discords, both in his culture and in ours. Our culture, like his, is in many respects inferior to the specialised finish of the French and the theoretical learning of the Germans; but, on the other hand, the colour is more brilliant both in us and in the Italians.”¹

Having temporarily left the question of emigration surrounding Herzen, we turn to his works. Hot on the trail of the events, when he was still in Paris, Herzen began to work on a series of sketches which saw the light of day under the title *From the Other Shore*. This work, in terms of the fates of European revolutions, was extremely pessimistic. Even the letters which he was writing to his friends at this time are witness to a serious spiritual crisis, to the desire which he experienced for the first time, to detach himself from reality in order to understand the essence of those processes which were occurring in himself and in the world.

“...One has to try, as much as possible, to keep to the sidelines from all the secondhand markets — there you’ll only hear how the hawkers curse one another and how the swindlers, phrasemongers and counterfeiters fight amongst themselves. I can’t help it but I can get away from them.

“I think that an individual has exactly as much autonomy as an entire epoch, as all mankind together.

“... The most important thing now is to be able to disdain and to understand oneself, in this estrangement, as something autonomous... Iceland and Holland exist just as they are, and so do I. I’m something of a little Iceland.”²

In explaining the title of his sketches to the German publicist Moses Hess, Herzen maintained that “from the other shore means only the revolutions abroad and absolutely nothing more”.³ But he was more specific in his explanation to Proudhon: “I’m publishing an essay in Zurich that could be called the philosophy of the revolution of 1848.”⁴

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. III, p. 74.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 183, 184.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

This was a work written by a man who not only witnessed these events from closeup, but who experienced them so deeply that they penetrated into his "very brain and nerves",¹ and became the "very essence"² of his being. And it was in this work that a brave attempt was made to fully analyse the events. "I will be happy," Herzen wrote, "if my writing will help to explain the 'pathology' of the revolution; and I would achieve my goal if I could show how the final thunder bolts of the revolution rambled, and what impressions they produced on the Russian spirit." ³

At the centre of Herzen's dramatic musings on the fate of this revolution there stands an explanation of the causes for the bourgeoisie's betrayal of the proletariat. Attempting to answer this question, he accused the revolutionaries of the defeat. He maintained that these individuals were afraid of revolution, these "clowns of freedom" merely "played at Republic, at Terror, at Government".⁴

"The democratic faction ... was defeated because it did not deserve a victory. And it did not deserve a victory because it was constantly making mistakes, and feared being completely revolutionary... It is impossible for empty individuals such as Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc ... to achieve a revolution." Herzen considered it necessary to break away from the "declining world".⁵ Later, in expanding his thoughts on this subject, he wrote: "Democracy stands completely on old ground, that of the monarchy and Christianity; it is like the Bourbons during the revolution in that it learned nothing in those two terrible years after 1848. And the people, more and more, are moving from a state of sympathy toward democracy to a state of indifference. During those June Days in 1848 the

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 243.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 97.

³ Alexandre Herzen, *Lettres de France et d'Italie (1847-1852)*, p. 308.

⁴ Alexander Herzen, *From the Other Shore*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1956, p. 145.

⁵ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 187-88.

people called democracy out into the streets, but it was in hiding. On 13 June 1849, democracy came out into the streets, but the people didn't follow. The people were not with it. It learned much: the masses like women, learn not in school, but from their own misfortunes and come to know the concrete truth all at once, through their instinct and contemplation."¹

So the people were not with the revolutionaries, and they weren't with the old world either, but neither were they ready for a conscious and goal-oriented action. The workers did not evaluate their strength properly and the peasants lagged behind in their education. When they finally take each other by the hand, they'll sweep the old social order from the face of the earth.

In his sketches *From the Other Shore*, Herzen talked about his ideas as to the variety of revolutionary paths. Of course, it was not without foundation that he suggested that people wanted less bloody ways of progress. But the level of development of the majority was not sufficient for that. Other paths might lead to the formation of a significant segment of the petty bourgeoisie who are even worse proprietors, and the power of the workers' revolutionary impulses might be weakened by certain trivial improvements.

In noting the maturity of Herzen's sociological prognoses in 1849, it should be emphasized that, at this time, he didn't harbour any specific hope for a proletarian victory in the future struggle. In his introduction to *From the Other Shore*, he formulated his credo as follows: "I believe in nothing here, except in a handful of people, a few ideas, and the fact that one cannot arrest movement; I see the inevitable doom of old Europe and feel no pity for anything that now exists... I am in deep sympathy with the bitter tears of the proletariat and the desperate courage of its friends."²

But, two years later, in 1851, Herzen was able to refine his formulation, "The French people is ripe neither for socialism, nor for freedom, but it is ripe for revolution; its strength is its consciousness of

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 198.

² Alexander Herzen, *From the Other Shore*, pp. 10, 11.

social lies, its spite and its amazing unity. The French people is an army, ... an army of communism... One should not fear communism; it is inevitable; it is the true liquidation of the old society and the introduction into the possession of the new.”¹

In accordance with the doctrine of Utopianism, Herzen saw communism first and foremost as the complete destruction of all principles and forms of the old world, followed by a reorganisation of life on the basis of a new, strict regulation. The next stage of development, in Herzen's view, would be a form of socialism which “will develop in all its phases until it reaches its own extremes and absurdities. Then once again a cry of denial will break from the titanic chest of the revolutionary minority and again a mortal struggle will begin, in which socialism will play the rôle of contemporary conservatism and will be overwhelmed in the subsequent revolution, as yet unknown to us.”² Thus, paying his respects to Hegelian dialectics, Herzen gave form to the idea of the perpetual development and eternal motion of life.

An idealist in his understanding of history, Herzen nevertheless arrived at an affirmation of two extremely important historic facts: the counter-revolutionary nature of mid-19th century Western European bourgeois liberalism and the inability of the proletariat to lead a conscious and successful struggle under the conditions of 1848-1849. Towards the end of the 1840s and into the beginning of the 1850s, Herzen often wrote of the death of bourgeois civilisation. His articles and letters were full of references to “the anguish of the twilight, of change and of foreboding”.³ “Like a real Scythian, I joyfully look on as that old dying world falls apart, and I don't feel the least bit sorry for it,” Herzen wrote in 1849 to Proudhon. “Our duty now is to raise our voices and proclaim that this old world, to which we only partially belong, is dying. Its death will be our investiture.”⁴

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 199.

² Alexander Herzen, *From the Other Shore*, p. 147.

³ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 177.

However, Herzen's image of a dying Europe was an exaggeration, an example of his literary leanings. A comparison of his various statements shows that, in the 1850s, Herzen still continued to see in Europe a mighty force in the form of the "French proletariat and farmers". And, most importantly, Herzen was always aware of the importance of Western social thought, seeing in the very idea of socialism the peak of Western development. "Europe," he wrote, "bequeaths to the coming world socialism, as the fruits of its efforts and as the peak of its development."¹

Socialism had been Herzen's guiding light since the beginning of the 1830s. And he continued to search for various ways of realising this ideal, all the while staying true to it. Having come to the realisation that utopian socialism was unfit as a revolutionary theory in the class struggles of 1848, Herzen was forced to broaden the parameters of his search for a reality better disposed to perceiving and developing the concept of socialism. And for this reason he turned to the Russian, and in general, the Slavic, peasant commune (*mir*), having conceded that the methods of developing a land commune might prove fruitful for social progress.

"I think that the Slavic peoples will never have vigour to make the move from patriarchal communism to a more conscious socialism without the help of Western socialist ideas... But, on the other hand, I am convinced that uninhibited freedom will never reign in the West as long as Russia remains like a soldier in the service of the Petersburg emperor."²

This inter-relationship and interdependence between the revolutionary processes in Western Europe and Russia was responsible for attracting a number of Russian revolutionaries. Ever since the time of the French Revolution of 1789, the liberation movement in Russia had been closely tied up with the leading ideas in the West. This was first recognised in the beginning of the 19th century by the Decembrists, those Russian revolutionaries whose armed uprising against the mo-

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII, p. 111.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, p. 285.

narchy on 14 December 1825 gave them their name. Just prior to Herzen, M. A. Bakunin came forward with the similar idea of a close interconnection between the European and Russian, or chiefly, Slavic movements. Herzen attempted not only to declare such ideas, but to substantiate them by pointing out that they became an organic part of that theory of "Russian socialism" which he formulated after the revolution of 1848.

The basis for Herzen's socialist theory was the peasant land commune. Herzen perceived the communal use of the land, meadows, pasture and forests, a communal self-government and a certain equality between the commune members, and the idea of the peasant of his right to toil the land as the germ of the collective ownership of the future. "We have found the germ of economic and administrative institutes, based on communal land-ownership and agrarian and instinctive communism in the Russian peasant hut."¹ Herzen saw the task of the Russian movement as "the problem of consciously developing, on a scientific basis, that element of our communal self-government to a degree of complete individual freedom, bypassing those intermediate stages [here Herzen had in mind those governmental and economic forms along which Western capitalism had evolved — *N. P.*] through which the West, of necessity, had passed, all the while straying along unknown paths. Our new life must interweave into a single cloth those two strands, those two legacies, so that a free individual will not lose his land and so that the commune member will remain an absolutely free individual."²

This question of the correlation of not only a "legacy", but of the future development of Russia and the West was central to Herzen's theory. In the following years he often returned to it, adding new arguments, making them more concrete, but never changing his original premises.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 179.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, p. 183.

In those years when Herzen was formulating his new concepts, his personal life, his spiritual world, which had heretofore been full of harmony, went through a period of catastrophe and fell apart. And in all those years after, Herzen was unable to fully recover from this blow. "One torn string has destroyed the whole fret, but what a string it was. With its breaking, the main knot has come undone and the whole cloth has become unraveled..."¹ Such were the words Herzen recorded in his diary a few years after his wife's death.

Natalya Alexandrovna Herzen was an elegant and good-hearted woman of great intellect who possessed a nobility of spirit. And all these qualities blended seamlessly together in her person. For her, life meant love, suffering and spiritual sympathy with the surrounding world. In all she said and did, Natalya Herzen preserved her naturalness and sincerity, but being a woman with a passionate nature, she was, at times, disposed to extremes. "Life can never be just good for me," she would say, "it must always be either very good or very bad."²

Life was "very good" for her in her homeland, where she had her family and circle of close Moscow friends. But with the family's departure abroad, her interests became much broader. She experienced the revolutions in Italy and in France no less keenly than did Herzen himself, first exultantly and then tragically. In July 1848, in a letter to Russia, Natalya Alexandrovna wrote about the situation as the proletarian uprising was being finally quashed: she wrote of the state of siege that Paris was in, of gunfire which had been raging for four days, about the 8,000 casualties, and other "details, which the heart cannot bear to write of. It's amazing that we are still alive, but we are alive only in a physical sense... There were moments that I wished I could have been killed, together with the whole family. I don't know whether or not we

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, p. 601.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 165.

will ever recover enough from this to be able once again to smile sincerely.”¹ “Of course, I suffer along with Alexander, and I find rest only in constantly caring for the children; but even then, it often seems to me that all this suffering and effort is for naught, and I envy that leaf on the tree, which is only rustled by the wind; consciousness, after all, has a high price.”²

But time passed and life found its own rhythm. Friends new and old would come to talk and talk... On 6 December 1848, Natalya Alexandrovna wrote to Pavel Annenkov that they often saw Georg Herwegh and his family: “Either we go to sit by their fire, or they come to sit by ours. You know how it is: couches along either side, and between them, whether at our house or theirs, Turgenev is usually lying on the floor and asking in his sleepy voice: ‘Do you know this game?’”³

Georg Herwegh became a close friend of the Herzens in 1848. One of Germany’s leading political poets and popular as well as a figure in the international democratic movement, Herwegh was a handsome man with a refined intellect and a broad education. However, according to Annenkov who knew him well, “this marvelous personality concealed within itself caches of egoism, Epicurean appetites, and needs to pamper and satisfy its passions at whatever cost and without concern for the fate of the victims that would fall under the knife of its wanton egoism”.⁴

Seven years later, in analysing the reasons for his closeness with Herwegh, or “getting down to a story about psychopathology”, Herzen raised some curious consideration as to the differences between civilisations: “Among us intellectual development serves as a purification and a guarantee. Exceptions are rare....

“In Western Europe this is not so. And that is how it is that we readily surrender to a man who touches upon our holy things, who understands our cherished

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁴ P. V. Annenkov, *The Extraordinary Decade. Literary Memoirs*, p. 191.

thoughts, who boldly utters what we are wont to pass over in silence or to speak of in whispers to a friend. We do not take into account that half the sayings which set our hearts beating and our bosoms heaving have become for Europe truisms or phrases; we forget how many corrupt passions, the artificial passions of old age, are entangled in the soul of a modern man belonging to that effete civilisation".¹

In fact, the numerous letters which make up the correspondence between Herwegh and Herzen bear witness to what would seem to be a spiritual closeness of of these two individuals, to their political as well as personal common interests and to their similarities in tastes and goals. It was not for nothing that in the heat of this friendship, Herwegh began to be referred to as "the twin". In a postscript to a letter from her husband, Natalya Alexandrovna wrote the following: "What can I say, my dear, dear twin? That I love you with all my heart? That's nothing new, but all the same, it's not as boring as everything else."²

In 1849, Herzen began to notice "various changes" in Herwegh which would seem to indicate that his attitude toward Natalya Alexandrovna was beginning to go beyond the bounds of pure friendship. In September 1849, Natalya Alexandrovna wrote to Timofei Granovsky, a close friend of the Herzens in Moscow: "You probably know, Granovsky, how in some relationships even the slightest discord is unbearable... And what is there in life, what is life at all without accord?... The history of the world and the history of my heart are, for me, one and the same. Sometimes it seems that everything is perishing, and that you're perishing too, and so you immediately begin searching for an equilibrium. There, whole nations languish in neglect, here the individual is more beautiful and more complete than any of the ideals of our youth. There, there's the life of whole centuries which ended awkwardly, senselessly and fruitlessly — here, whole centuries flower luxuriously and ripen in one lifetime."³

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. IV, p. 23.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 68.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 181.

In talking about the "delirium of the heart" that Natalya Alexandrovna experienced, Herzen used his wife's own words and these words also helped him to understand the beginning of her passions. "There is an element left out in you," Natalie said to me, "and the lack of it goes very well with your character; you don't understand the yearning for the tender care of a mother, a friend, a sister, which so frets Herwegh. I understand it because I feel it myself. He is a big child, while you are a grown-up man; he can be distressed or made happy by a trifle. A harsh word is almost death to him, he must be spared. ... On the other hand, with what infinite gratitude he thanks one for the smallest attention, for warmth, for sympathy!..."¹ That "element left out" was that steadfast independence which Herzen possessed and about which he himself wrote at the time: "With strong nerves and muscles, I stood independent and self-reliant, and was ready to give a helping hand to another, though I never asked for help or support as a charity for myself."² Herwegh's answer to this was that "I know the pitiful weakness of my character ... support me, be an elder brother, a father to me. ... I have no one near or dear to me — I concentrate on you all my affections — you can make anything of me by love and friendship — do not be severe, but kind and indulgent. Let me keep your hand ... and, indeed, I shall not let it go, I cling to you."³

And so it happened that Natalie's sympathetic nature was attracted by the imaginary sufferings of the new Werther. And her desire to help and to comfort him proved fatal. We'll let Natalya Alexandrovna speak for herself, in her own words: "...There, where I felt even a hint of sympathy, I grabbed on to it passionately, and paid for one kind gesture with pieces of my own burning heart; and everything vital, whether it be bitter or sweet, personal or general, everything attracted me, and flowed into my veins, mixing with my own life's blood (...) I wasn't looking for just

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. IV, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

good, but for completeness, and I found it; life could give no more and I will part with life, gratefully, even though young.”¹ She had a little more than one year left to live at this time, and that completeness, towards which she was striving, turned out to be too much for her. And the new and terrible grief which befell her family, weakened her even more. But all of this happened gradually.

At that time Herwegh was forced to flee from Nice where both families were living. While in exile, he would send letters which quite openly showed his sufferings and spoke of committing suicide. Finally, he made the cause of his break with Herzen public property.

Herzen himself wrote about those months: “Empty days, sleepless nights ... melancholy ... melancholy”. Natalya Alexandrovna was still unable to come to terms with her feelings for Herwegh, but she came to accept the necessity of a break. On 20 March 1851, she wrote to Moscow: “After all these storms, I find my only refuge in my children. I’m not looking for anything else for myself in life; I’m leaving the problem of remaking the world for someone else... All my passions, all my proud but unrealised dreams and plans have disappeared; the idea that I am giving completely of myself in all that I do and all that I am, gives me some peace of mind. If I have taught my children to be loved, that is to love, then my life has been worth living.”²

In June 1851, in order to spend a little time alone and better understand his own feelings, Herzen left Nice temporarily. His condition was serious. He loved and was suffering and with his whole heart he wanted to restore that lost harmony. A few sentences from his letters to his wife are proof of this desire: “...my love has neither been carried away by the wind, nor conquered by time. This emotion ... will go with me to the grave”.³ “Often some kind of terrible foreboding troubles me, something indistinct, but frightening... Please, my dear friend, don’t be angry with me for my sad

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 165.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

tone... Put yourself in my place and you'll forgive me my moaning. The furthest thing from my mind is to trouble you with my words — but they wouldn't be so tormenting, if love would return. And I have to believe in that, so that I can live."¹ "I want to end my life with the revived love. But that depends now on you. Can I give that much ... I don't believe in myself..."²

Herzen returned to Nice full of alarm and Natalya Alexandrovna came to meet him in Turin. "The broken threads grew together more firmly than ever. ... I am thankful to destiny for those days,"³ Herzen wrote.

In *My Past and Thoughts*, in analysing this "delirium of the heart", Herzen generalised much, giving new and deeper, wiser meaning to the past.

"The past is not a proof that can be corrected, but a guillotine knife; after it has once fallen there is much that cannot grow together again, and there is always something left that cannot be set right. It remains as though cast in metal, distinct, unalterable, dark as bronze. Men as a rule forget only what is not worth remembering, or what they do not understand. ... One need not be a Macbeth to meet the ghost of Banquo: ghosts are not criminal judges, nor pangs of conscience, but the happenings that can never be obliterated from the mind.

But one ought not to forget; that is a weakness, that is a falsity of a sort; the past has its rights, it is a fact, one has to get over it and not to forget it — and we moved towards that, keeping step."⁴

But even these last steps were darkened by a terrible misfortune. In the middle of November 1851, Herzen's mother, together with his eight-year-old son Kolya and Kolya's tutor Spielmann perished in the sea when the ship on which they were returning to Nice sank.

And from this day forward, Natalya Alexandrovna's

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. IV, p. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

health became increasingly worse. Herwegh would not leave the family in peace; his wounded pride demanded some sort of action and he began to circulate rumours about the unfortunate and ailing woman. In February, 1852 she forwarded a letter to him through friends, with the condition that it be publicly read aloud to him: "...Yes, my infatuation was immense and blind, but your character, treacherous, ... your unbridled egoism, have been displayed in all their hideous nakedness... From the time you went away you began torturing me, demanding first one promise, then another. You meant to vanish for years, ... if only you could take with you the smallest hope. When you saw that that did not answer, you suggested one absurd thing after another ... and ended by threatening me with *publicity*. ... I tell you again what I wrote in my last letter: 'I remain in my home — my home is Alexander and my children.' ... There is no bridge between you and me..."¹ She died on 2 May 1852.

Let us return now to the time with which we began our story, to Herzen, whom we left in London, to his thoughts, his activities and his struggle.

From his earliest youth, Herzen was, by nature, a revolutionary. He was a man who was always and everywhere actively involved in the fight against slavery, oppression and the autocracy in Russia, and then against the bourgeois powers of the West. The struggle was his poetry. "From 13 to 38," he wrote to Mazzini in 1850, "I served only one idea and under one banner: that of a war against any power, against any captivity, in the name of a completely free and independent individual. I will continue this partisan war ... together with the great revolutionary army, but I won't enter into its regular ranks until it is reformed, that is, until it becomes completely revolutionary."²

The weight of the events of the last few years could not affect the essence of his individuality. "Yes," he wrote towards the end of 1852, "I will remain, to the end of my life, that moving, revolutionary nature, *semper in motu*, as I carved out on my stamp. This

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, pp. 84, 85.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, p. 142.

enthusiasm, this fermenting beginning will save me from misfortune and disaster.”¹

The Free Russian Press became that vital revolutionary act which not only “saved” Herzen, but laid the foundation for an uncensored Russian press. As early as 1849, Herzen had the idea of printing Russian books in Paris, but political conditions and personal affairs kept him from realising this dream. All the same, this thought never left him, even during those difficult years. In August 1851, Herzen wrote to a Russian acquaintance: “While I am forced to stay here on this Western shore I dream only of being your uncensored voice; and because of this, I didn’t particularly try to return, in order to acquaint Europe with Russia, and to be Russia’s free voice.”²

The leaflet “Free Russian Bookprinting in London. Dedicated to our Brothers in Russia”, with the signature “Alexander Herzen (Iskander)”, signalled the beginning of the uncensored press.

“Open, free speech is a grand thing, for without free speech there can be no free man. It’s not for nothing that people give their lives for free speech, abandon their homelands and their property. Only the weak, the fearing and the immature hide from it. ‘Silence is an indication of agreement,’ it clearly indicates renunciation, hopelessness, surrender and an accepted despair. The free word is a solemn admission, a passing into action.”³ Herzen was right. The word was becoming action, revolutionary action directed against the autocracy. He himself fully realised the meaning and import of his propaganda. “Founding a Russian printing-house in London is the most revolutionary of actions that a Russian might take while waiting to perform other, more important actions.”⁴

But as long as Tsar Nicholas I was alive, Herzen’s venture had no vital response from his homeland. At the same time the West immediately took notice

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-375.

² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

of and recognised his activity. As early as the beginning of 1853 many European newspapers had already written about the opening of the Free Russian Press in London. On the basis of this fact, the English paper *The Leader* drew a conclusion that was flattering for England: London was becoming the centre of the intellectual movement. European democracy supported Herzen in word and deed: his articles were printed in various democratic and revolutionary editions, in London he made speeches at international gatherings, and he received help in circulating his pamphlets.

The more revolutionary his demands, the less of a chance he had to achieve free speech from his non-free friends. He bitterly wrote about the witticism of the French singer Pauline Viardot: "We represent up the whole of Russian publicity: her husband [the author I. S. Turgenev — *N. P.*] translates, I write and she sings Russia."¹ He received no material from Russia and therefore he printed his own leaflets, pamphlets, and articles.

In 1852 he began to write his autobiographical *Notes* which eventually merged into the major work in his life, *My Past and Thoughts*. Work on the book continued over a period of 16 years and Herzen's own perception of the book varied during different periods. In 1861, in the foreword to the first edition, issued as a separate book, Herzen wrote: "These are not so much 'notes' as they are a confession, around which and because of which I've gathered bits and pieces of various memories of the Past, bits and pieces of various ideas from my Thoughts."² This characterisation referred to the form of the narrative and did not pretend to reveal the content. "Thoughts" (or, in other words, theory) were one of the components of that marvellous alloy which was Herzen's prose; organically interwoven into the fabric of the narrative, they did not make it dry or deprive it of its fascination, shine or originality.

In his own time, the famous Russian critic Visarion Belinsky first posed the question of the com-

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 70.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 9.

bination of "the intellectual with the artistic" in Herzen's prose. He suggested that the traditional forms of fiction were unable to comprise the originality of Herzen's works. *My Past and Thoughts* arose on the edge of history, memoirs and the novel, but became neither the first, nor the second nor the third. The philosophical-artistic principle of presenting "history in man" helped Herzen combine Russia and the West into a single work, together with the revolutionary struggle and reaction, history and the contemporary conflict of ideas, philosophical generalisations and the intimate world of the individual.

Herzen's artistic persuasiveness was enormous. His portraits imprinted themselves on the minds of generations of readers, and the events which he describes on the pages of *My Past and Thoughts* are unforgettable.

The strength of Herzen's prose lies in the artlessness of his style, in the absence of any conditionality, in his never-ending search for the truth and in his originality of language. "His language," wrote I. S. Turgenev, "is incredibly incorrect; it delights me to no end; it's like a living body..." Only a great artist and stylist like Turgenev could feel, understand and define one of the most characteristic traits of Herzen's works. This "living body" of language, in conjunction with a vital, ever-changing, moving and searching thought, created those images which were filled with the strength of artistically formulated authenticity.

Chapters from *My Past and Thoughts* began to appear in the almanac *Polyarnaya Zvezda* (Polar Star) which opened a new page in the history of the Free Russian Press. The appearance of such a publication became possible only after the death of Nicholas I which served as an impetus for changes in Russia's political situation. The possibility of receiving material from Russia for the new publication now became a reality. All the same, Herzen had no intention of waiting for such material, considering that it was impossible to slow down. At the end of March 1855, he wrote to Jules Michelet: "I am now beginning to publish a Russian journal under the title of *Polar Star*, the reference being to the title of an almanac which was

edited by Ryleyev and suppressed by Nicholas I. The clouds pass, but the stars remain. I want the first issue to come out on the same date that Pestel was executed."

Kondraty Ryleyev and Pavel Pestel were leading figures in the aforementioned Decembrist uprising. At the end of his letter, Herzen expressed the hope of receiving from Michelet, whose name "Russia knows and loves", two or three pages.¹

Herzen himself and his friends read this famous French historian and democrat in the 1830s and 1840s. An apologist for the people and a prophet of the republican order, political freedoms and social justice, Michelet was a prominent and quite authoritative representative for the opposition intelligentsia in the West. Michelet's humanism and exalted intellectualism, his method of historical cognition, the extreme poetic style of his generalisations and digressions were not only close to Herzen, but in some measure recalled the latter's conceptions of the cognition of the past. The two met in Paris in 1851, and Herzen immediately dedicated his work "The Russian People and Socialism" to Michelet. And from then on their friendly and publicistic contacts continued unabated.

The first issue of *Polar Star* came out in August 1855. "We lay this first issue of *Polar Star* at Russia's doorstep and are waiting, with confidence and self-sacrifice to see whether or not you will 'adopt' it, and whether or not you see even a faint reflection of Ryleyev's and Bestuzhev's *Polar Star*", wrote Herzen in his address "To Our People". Further on, pointing to changes which had already taken place in Russia Herzen continued: "If you don't have anything to say now, or if you don't want to speak out; if it is sufficient for you to make pale references and hints in your deaf-mute journals, then we'll proudly renounce our idea and instead of a Russian review, we'll publish a review about Russia."² In informing that French democrats had agreed to participate in the Russian journal, Herzen wrote: "They understood that their place

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 252.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. 295.

was with the enemies of the autocracy and not the Russian people.

"Victor Hugo, Guiseppe Mazzini, Jules Michelet, Louis Blanc, Pierre Proudhon are with us!... The revolution, socialism is with us!"¹

Michelet, whose letter Herzen included in the letters from European democrats, wrote: "Do you think that I am prepared to take an active and sincere part in your Russian, and our common affair? Yes, without the slightest doubt.

"...Now, even the simplest of people will begin to understand that the liberation of Russia is an absolute necessity for the liberation of the world."² Victor Hugo wrote to Herzen: "You are accomplishing something European, something human, something intelligent — and that is good... The review which you are founding will be one of the most promising banners of this idea. I shake your hand, thank you and congratulate you, and if such a word has meaning for my relative insignificance, then I encourage you!"³

Soon after, Herzen's free press enjoyed a period of flowering and ever-increasing popularity in Russia. The first issues of *Polar Star* were sold out, as were all previous editions from his printing-house. Not only was he flooded with material from Russia, but inundated by many Russians, friends and strangers alike. In April 1856, his closest friend Nikolai Platonovich Ogarev arrived in London with his wife Natalya Alexeyevna.

Later, she recalled how Ogarev once remarked to Herzen: "You know, Alexander, *Polar Star* and *My Past and Thoughts* are fine, but that's not exactly what we need; this isn't a dialogue with one's own. We need to publish a regular journal once every two weeks or once a month so that we could express our views, our wishes for Russia, and so forth."⁴ Thus was formulated the idea for *Kolokol* (The Bell),

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XV, p. 289.

³ *Lettres inédites de Herzen, Ogarev, Bakounine*, Librairie des Cinq Continents, Paris, 1975, p. 59.

⁴ *Herzen Remembered by His Contemporaries*, Moscow, 1956, p. 189 (in Russian).

which, it was decided, would be published with the subheading "Supplement to *Polar Star*".

The first issue of *The Bell*, with an epigraph from Friedrich Schiller "Vivos voco!" appeared on 1 July 1857 and its success exceeded all its publishers' expectations. The entire edition of 2,500 copies was sold out with amazing speed, and it should be taken into account that each issue was read by dozens of readers, and various articles were copied out and circulated from hand to hand. In Russia, *The Bell* bound its way not only to the capitals. It was read in the provinces, in the Caucasus and Siberia. In Irkutsk, Tomsk, Chita and Nikolayevsk-on-the-Amur Herzen's editions were as popular among the Siberian administration as they were among the political exiles. Even the seemingly almighty Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, N. N. Muravyev-Amursky sought, through the mediation of Bakunin, the support of *The Bell*. Both the court circles and the young *raznochintsi* alike were interested in *The Bell*. The hotter the debate surrounding the preparations for peasant reform (the abolition of serfdom), the greater was the demand for freedom of speech whose only forum at that time was *The Bell*. In the beginning of 1858, Herzen's old friend and one of the leaders of Russian liberalism, Konstantin Kavelin, wrote to him: "Your influence is without measure... The young people adore you, procure your portraits, they even refrain from abusing those individuals or ideas that you, with obvious design, do not abuse. In other words, you have enormous power in your hands... Your articles revive criminal cases which have long sunk into oblivion, your *Bell* is used to threaten the powers-that-be. 'What will *The Bell* say?', 'How will *The Bell* respond?' This is the question everyone asks himself, and ministers and bureaucrats of all classes fear the reply."¹

The number of people who came to visit Herzen at this time was constantly on the rise. He was finally forced to declare two days a week (Wednesday and Sunday at 3:00) as visiting days for all of these "kind

¹ *Letters from K. D. Kavelin and I. S. Turgenev to A. I. Herzen*, Geneva, 1892, p. 11 (in Russian).

strangers". In April, 1859, Herzen wrote to Michelet: "Our affairs are moving ahead; the Russian propaganda from London is growing *crescendo* and we are a force which worries the government and which it no longer dares to deny." ¹

The Bell appeared in what was one of the tensest moments in Russian history, a period of peasant unrest, of increased activity in the area of social struggle and preparation for peasant reform. For Herzen, liberating the peasantry from serfdom was the most important problem and from its very inception, the Free Russian Press based its entire propaganda on this one question. Now it finally seemed to Herzen that he had firm ground to stand on. The years prior to the peasant reform were for Herzen ones filled with the struggle to "Free the press from censorship! Free the peasant from the landowner!" and to "Free poll-tax payers from beating" ². Such was the platform on which *The Bell* was founded. These very same demands, in slightly different form, sounded from the pages of the Russian censored press and in society itself. They were conditioned by the serious crisis which had affected all of the feudal-serf system of the state. This crisis, in all its obviousness, came to light during the Crimean War of 1853-1856, in which Russia was opposed by England, France and Turkey. The war was waged for domination in the Near East, and Russia, because of its socio-economic and military backwardness, was defeated.

The peasant unrest which had been growing during the war and immediately following it, made the government's position even more acute and forced it to begin reforming. But Alexander II, who ascended the throne in 1855, feared not only the peasantry, but their owners, the nobility upon whom the Russian autocracy rested, as well. As a result of this, the tsar's first declaration about preparations for peasant reform was made only in answer to an appeal made by a segment of the nobility. The government's plan for reform was set forth in a proclamation at the end of 1857. It was suggested

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 254.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 8.

that each province create a committee of landowners to oversee the "Organisation and Improvement of the Life of the Serfs". It was in these committees that the struggle developed as to what degree the nobility should make concessions. The results of these discussions found their way into the Chief Committee on the Peasant Affairs. On 19 February 1861, Alexander II affirmed the "Statutes on the Peasantry, Freed from Serfdom".

The peasantry received their personal freedom while the landowners retained their right to ownership of all land belonging to them. The latter were required to provide the peasants with land for a farmstead and a field allotment for the use of which the peasants had to work, as in the past, for the landowner. In agreement with the landowner, the peasant had the right to redeem the allotment and in this way become its owner. But, the vast majority of the peasantry had no such possibility and these peasants were referred to as "under temporary obligation".

In the minds of the people, the concepts of land and freedom were indivisible. Liberation without land caused a wave of demonstrations demanding a different, a real freedom. It often happened that this unrest was put down with armed force. And in these instances, Herzen always raised his voice in defence of the people. After peasants were shot in the village of Bezdna, in the Kazan province, after demonstrations in the province of Penza, Perm and Petersburg were put down, Herzen wrote in *The Bell*: "Oh, if only my words could reach your ears, you who toil and suffer on Russian soil! ... You hate and you fear your landowner and your church scribe — and you are right to do so; but still you believe in the tsar and the clergy ... don't! The tsar is with them and they are his own". In decreeing liberation, the tsar, Herzen continued, "wanted to open the people's eyes and in order to hasten this process, he sent aides-de-camp with bullets and rods to all corners of Russia".¹

In these early post-reform years, *The Bell* strengthened its defence of the Polish national liberation struggle.

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XV, p. 135.

Revolutionary thought and action continued to swirl around Herzen and Ogarev, boiling and intensifying. In the end of 1861 Mikhail Bakunin, who had escaped from Siberian exile, turned up in London. He took an active part in the editing of *The Bell*. In the beginning of the 1860s both friends and opponents of Herzen continued to arrive. As usual he was surrounded by those members of the international democratic movement who were spiritually closest to him. One day in April, 1864, Herzen was visited by the two leaders of the Italian movement: Garibaldi and Mazzini. At breakfast Garibaldi raised his glass with the following toast: "To Poland, the home of martyrs, to Poland facing death for independence and setting a grand example to the peoples! ... To young Russia, who is suffering and struggling as we are, and like us will be victorious; to the new people which, vanquishing the Russian Tsardom and winning its freedom, is evidently destined to play a great part in the future of Europe."¹

* * *

How, then, did Herzen perceive himself in that complex and accelerating reality of the 1860s?

"I really have very little time for myself, I live for my work; it's going well, I ring 'my bell', and nothing more."² Such was the answer that a 48-year-old Herzen gave to the preceding question. On 15 June 1860, he wrote in his diary: "I am so tired; it's probably old age. Each blow, each effort leaves its trace. I have no strength left to fight back, des Trostes [consolation] is lacking ... and, most importantly, victory is not what I want, but rest. If only they would leave me in peace...

"I thought that this time would be time for me to work, a time for inner concentration, but it turns out that this is a time of melancholy, anxiety that turns into pain ... almost the pangs of conscience."³

An early sense of aging, a profound melancholy and anxiety — all of these feelings that would seem to be

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, 1926, p. 65.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI, p. 14.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, Book 2, p. 601.

incompatible with Herzen's life-affirming nature, were born of the tragedy in his personal life.

Three years after Ogarev had arrived in London with his family, Natalya Alexeyevna became Herzen's wife. Into this new family came a daughter Liza and then twins who died at three years of diphtheria. But neither these young children, nor the older ones, of whom she was insanely jealous, and not even Herzen's work, whose significance she, it seemed, fully understood, could check her disposition. She was a psychologically complex individual, concerned exclusively with herself. Her egocentrism knew no bounds, even though she herself occasionally fell victim to her own words and deeds.

"There is no harmony in our family life. The task is a difficult one, egoism is more developed ... and all of this will fall on the heads of the little ones... In other words, nothing but gloom and doom,"¹ Herzen wrote in his diary for 8 January, 1864. The older children were forced to live separately from the family and Herzen suffered greatly because of this. From the mid-1860s on, when he was forced to leave London, he found himself with no fixed place of residence and moved constantly from one city to another.

The multifaceted and practical activity of a revolutionary and the burden of his personal life never once halted the theoretical searching of Herzen the intellectual. In the beginning of the 1860s his cycle of articles in the form of letters entitled *Ends and Beginnings* became the most important landmark in this process. His letters were addressed to I. S. Turgenev, a constant opponent to his theory of "Russian socialism". Herzen's articles were devoted to the historical fates of Russia and the West. Each and every twist and turn of the years already spent opened up new aspects, new insights into this theme already so familiar to Herzen, making its reasonings all the more definite. He now approached the basic tenets of Russian socialism from a different angle and spoke in different ways about the development and results of Western civilisation. He wrote more dispassionately, more objectively about

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, p. 605.

the bourgeoisie (or, as he called them, the petty bourgeoisie). His laconic phrases were distinguished by their volume as well as by their artistic precision.

"Bourgeoisie, the last word of civilisation, founded on the absolute despotism of property, is the 'democratisation' of aristocracy, the 'aristocratisation' of democracy. ...The United States present the spectacle of one class — the middle class. ... The German peasant is the petty bourgeois of agriculture; the workman of every country is the petty bourgeois of the future. Italy, the most poetical land in Europe, was not able to hold out, but at once forsook her fanatical lover, Mazzini, and betrayed her husband, the Hercules Garibaldi, as soon as Cavour, the petty bourgeois of genius, the little fat man in spectacles, offered to keep her as his mistress.

"With the coming of bourgeoisie, individual characters are effaced, but these effaced persons are better fed; clothes are made ... not to measure or to order, but there are more people who wear them. With the coming of bourgeoisie, the beauty of the race is effaced, but its prosperity increases..."¹

In another instance Herzen spoke directly about the "great stride forward", having in mind the growth of the urban petty bourgeoisie. This step, however, could not develop further as Herzen considered the petty bourgeoisie to be the final and definitive stage of Western civilisation. "The general plan of development," he suggested, "admits of endless unforeseen deviations" and "there are in life and nature no monopolies." And if representatives of old European cultures, who were transplanted on to American soil, could create a new nation, then "why should a nation that has developed in its own way under completely different conditions from those of the West European States ... live through the European past?"

"The Russian people, covering such wide spaces between Europe and Asia, and standing to the general family of European peoples somewhat in the relationship of a cousin, has taken scarcely any part in the family history of Western Europe. Developing late and

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, Vol. VI, 1927, pp. 11-12.

with difficulty, it must either show a complete incapacity for progress, or must produce something of its own under the influence of the past and of its neighbours' examples and its own point of view." ¹

A cautious restraint in his formulation of statements on the specifics of Russian communal existence and a bare outline of the subject of future development (which is "improvised on a theme of the past") are the basic characteristics of Herzen's *Letters*. "I do not regard the bourgeois system as the final form of Russian society, the organisation towards which Russia is striving and to attain which she will probably pass through a bourgeois period. Possibly the European peoples will themselves pass to another order of life, perhaps Russia will not develop at all; but just as that is possible, there are other possibilities too." ²

Thus, it was possible that there would be either a "bourgeois period" or a varied course of development. "Wherever I look I see grey hairs, wrinkles, bent backs, last wills and testaments, balanced accounts, funerals, ends, and I am always seeking and seeking beginnings. They are only to be found in theories and abstractions." ³ So it was that Herzen's facile and lively train of thought kept searching for a true path of development for both Russia and Europe.

The next few years had been marked for Herzen by a series of events which had altered much in his activity, but had not touched his very basic views. The consequent democratic position taken by *The Bell* on the Polish question and a public defence of the Polish uprising of 1864 had cost Herzen a great deal of his popularity in Russia. Liberal society which formed the greater part of *The Bell's* audience abandoned it in droves. And the radical-minded democratic youth, in light of the increasingly serious social struggle, began to find *The Bell* too moderate.

After 1864, letters from Russia began to arrive more and more infrequently and the flow of visitors

¹ *My Past and Thoughts*, pp. 80-83.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

essentially dried up. In 1865, *The Bell's* editors transferred their publication to Geneva and Herzen began to live, for the most part, in Switzerland. His attempts to form contacts with the young Russian émigrés were futile, and in 1867 the publication of *The Bell* was temporarily halted. In 1868 Herzen attempted to renew the publication on a new and different level, dedicating it to informing Europe about Russia. But the period of *The Bell's* publication in French lasted for less than a year.

Let's pause for a moment to consider Herzen's final appearances in *The Bell* which reflected the specific evolution of his views. "We aren't going on saying anything new,"¹ was the way in which he began his article entitled "Prolegomena". "Nothing new...", but this old problem of Russia and the West, in a publication intended for a European reader, took on a new significance, and the writings of the only Russian publicists in the West were a commitment to speak in the name of the country and the nation.

Herzen began with his distinction of Russia's significance and place in the world. "We are that part of the world which lies between America and Europe, and for us, that is sufficient."² "We are satisfied that we have Finnish and Mongol blood in our veins, and this puts us in a kindred, fraternal position, to those outcast races which the philanthropic democracies of Europe cannot speak of without scorn and insult"³.

Herzen began his analysis of the question of Western social science with an acknowledgement: "Since we lagged behind in everything, we were in a period of apprenticeship under you; and we never recoiled from those consequences which made you deviate from your path. We don't hide those good things which we received from you. We borrowed your torch to better see the horror of our position, to search for the open door and to go through it — and we

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

found it, thanks to you.”¹ Having thus paid homage to Western civilisation, Herzen went on to criticise it, figuratively comparing it to the sea which cannot overflow its shores. In continuing to develop his ideas on the organisation of human society, Herzen asserted that the forms and bases of contemporary state do not coincide with the most rational demands “formulated by science and the consciousness of the active and developed minority... Reason must either give way and recognize with a purely Christian humility that its ideal ‘is not of this world’, or it must destroy those forms and cease worrying about the fate of eternal fundamentals.”²

In his investigations of the highly contradictory principles of Western historical development, Herzen wrote: “Property is that mess of pottage for which you sold a grand future, to which your fathers opened wide the gates in 1789. You prefer a secure future, one of a retired rentier. Fine, but don’t say that you do so in the name of happiness for mankind and the salvation of civilisation... You always want to cover up your stubborn conservatism with revolutionary attributes; it’s insulting, and you outrage other nations, pretending that you still stand in the vanguard of the movement.”³

No matter how bitter his reproaches were of the Latin-Germanic world, Herzen, this time, didn’t exclude it from the social future of mankind. “In nature and in history we are all invited guests. All the same, it is impossible to enter into a new world carrying, like Atlas, the weight of the old world on our shoulders. We must die ‘in the old Adam’, in order to rise in the new, that is, we will have to experience a real, radical revolution.”⁴

And so that theme of revolution, far from inexhausted for the West, rose once again. And diligent observation of social life in Europe during 1868

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

brought Herzen to reflections on the growing strength of the revolutionary labor movement. In the last issue of *The Bell* (December, 1868), Herzen noted, in a counter-attack against those who predicted the collapse of socialism in the West: "All this is taking place just one day after the Brussels Congress, one day after the Geneva strikes, just a step away from the German labour movement — at a time when social questions have been raised with a force increased tenfold throughout all of Europe and England."¹

In an attempt to correct his ideas about the Western world, Herzen once again turned to the historical peculiarities of Russian life. "During the revolutions in the West, the land was almost completely forgotten, being relegated to the background, just as the peasants were. Everything was happening in the city, everything was being done by city-dwellers and for the third estate. If the urban worker was recalled from time to time, then the peasant was almost completely forgotten."² This is probably an accurate observation, but just how well-founded was this argument for the peasant's "right to land" as a basis for a restructuring of life? First of all, in his assertions Herzen was less categorical. "We are not saying that our attitude toward the land is the answer to the social question, but we're certain that it is a solution... The question is not whether to deny or affirm the right to land, but to help people be aware of it, to generalise, develop, apply, and correct it by personal independence."³

In developing this idea Herzen then turned to the problem of change in the position of the Russian peasant commune in connection with freeing the serfs. "This is the first time that the agrarian commune is drawn into the development of a grand state. And now we must wait and see what this movement will lead to before we can make any conclusions... The principle of self-government, just in its infant stage and crushed by the police and landowner,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

is beginning to free itself little by little from its swaddling clothes and diapers; an electoral element is putting down roots and the dead letter is becoming a reality.”¹

Of course, the situation of the commune changed in post-reform reality; it was, as Herzen rightly noted drawn into the process of the social development of the state. But his attention was drawn not to the tendency of decaying of this institution, but to those elements of self-government, which he clearly overestimated, being under the influence of the continuing bourgeois reforms. As a result of being insufficiently informed as to the situation in Russia and having to judge events solely on the basis of accounts in the press and because of an ebb in the flow of materials and visitors from Russia, Herzen formulated a series of rather illusory conceptions as to the progressive development of communal life.

The peaceful model of development “without rivers of blood from a long preface”² arose again as a counterweight to that of the West, in which Herzen now saw an obvious new upsurge in revolutionary possibilities. Thus these observations on the growing struggle in the West introduced new corrections into Herzen’s theory. His reflections had their own logical conclusions. “What is this strange fate of mine that makes me see, as I saw 20 years ago, a new crisis in the old illness and makes me write about it,” Herzen wrote three months before his own death. Herzen had in mind here his hopes of 1848 which had returned to him. And truly, 20 years had passed between the first crisis in Europe and the current one. All these years (up to and including 1868) Herzen, who had so suffered through the disaster of the first approach of the revolutions, denied the possibility of a re-awakening of the movement in the near future. His attention was concentrated on the social possibilities of Russian life, on the paths and fates of the Russian revolutionary movement, and on the problem of correlation of revolution and reform.

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, pp. 66-67.

² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

His search for revolutionary theory, without which, for him, revolution was unthinkable, led him through the Russian commune and the workers' artel and back to the West, to strikes and workers' organisations and, finally, to a synthesis of the Russian and Western movements.

To the end of the 1860s, in developing his theory of Russian socialism, Herzen linked it with the realisation, in various periods, of evolutionary or revolutionary development. By carefully following both social and political life in Russia, Herzen attempted to find even the smallest positive elements which might be able to promote the development of communal foundation and self-government. In a letter to Bakunin in April, 1867, Herzen wrote: "You are angry with Russia because she is up to her knees in mud and blood... But the question is not whether her boots are clean, but whether she is headed in the right direction... You must understand that things are happening roughly, but properly. Did you keep an eye on the jury? It's extremely interesting. Did you follow the Zemstvo (elective local council) meetings or the suggestion to tax the nobility... or the trial in general?"¹

This path summoned up in Herzen an all-abiding interest because he saw, at this moment, no other alternatives. For Herzen, Russian reality was a combination of the following forces: the peasantry, who were, at this time, noticeably silent; the youth, as yet unrecognised as a real force (composed of various estates and commonly referred to in Russian as *raznochintsi*); liberal society already on the road to reform in conjunction with the government; and finally the government itself which had been forced to introduce corrective measures into its system of governing.

Because he saw no real forces in his country which would facilitate social reform, Herzen, during the final years of his life more and more clearly saw the significance of the growing social and political labor movement in the West.

In a letter to his son written on 21 May 1869 Herzen wrote: "When I look into the strength of the social

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 88.

movement, into its depths and passions, I see clearly that the real struggle between the world of incomes and the world of labour is not far off.”¹

And in another letter on 2 June: “A social war is approaching, and it will be a terrible conflict because of the bourgeoisie’s dimwittedness and the workers’ spite. Conflicts are inevitable, sooner or later; little by little local conflicts in one generation will produce something more general. The devastation will be awful, in Russia as well as here.”²

And in a letter to Ogarev on 21 October, speaking about the “electrified atmosphere and the coming storm”: “Here there is chaos and we are walking on a volcano. I regret that I can’t convey all these impressions; this page in Paris life is worth volumes. The situation is more strained than it seems from afar.”³

In a letter dated 15 January, just six days before his death and a year and two months before the Paris Commune, Herzen wrote: “I have no idea what will happen; I’m no prophet, but it is abundantly clear that history is concluding its act here and that there will be a resolution, either to the plus side, or to the minus, but a resolution certainly will occur.”⁴

Such was the social foresight of Herzen the revolutionary. His revolutionary activity was organically combined with a humanism and internal freedom. “There is,” he said, “but one voice and one authority for us — that of *reason* and *understanding*. In rejecting them, we become unfrocked priests of science and renegades to civilisation.”⁵

Herzen formulated this latter statement in his final work, in his *Letters to an Old Comrade*. In concluding the present article, we’ll pause for a moment to examine this work which is the conclusion of his ideological search.

The *Letters* were addressed to Bakunin who perso-

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX, p. 119.

² *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁵ Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 590.

nified another model of revolutionary activity. In order to better understand them, one has to know those of Bakunin's ideas that Herzen was repudiating.

The polemic developed on the basis of questions concerning "forces, means, time, and the correct evaluation of historical material." Bakunin summoned youth to "throw themselves as one into the people, into the popular movement, into the brigand and peasant revolt ... and to unite all the desperate peasant outbreaks into a popular revolution, conscious and merciless."¹

"Throwing oneself into the struggle" and "uniting" to rouse a popular revolution were Bakunin's immediate demands. And so the question of time was answered, as well as the problem of readiness to act.

Herzen, on the other hand, felt that the call to arms could come only on the eve of the battle. "Our time of final, definitive study, a time which should precede an action is realised... In the past things were done by sheer force, zeal and courage, and people often acted on the spur of the moment — but not us."² In the first edition this concept ended with the phrase: "If new people must again go into battle against all odds, then they will go *knowing where they go and what to break and what to sow.*"³

Ogarev, who took part in this discussion from a position similar to Bakunin's, repudiated Herzen at that time: "To wait for a theory to become reality, doing nothing and taking no risks, is inadmissible, especially since the theory itself ... might very well take shape only after the revolution has occurred and circumstances demand the formulation of new relationships between people, built on a new foundation."⁴

¹ M. A. Bakunin, "Formulating the Revolutionary Question", in *Letters from M. A. Bakunin to A. I. Herzen and N. P. Ogarev*, Geneva; 1896, p. 474 (in Russian).

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book 2, pp. 576-577.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 661.

⁴ N. P. Ogarev, "Answers to an 'Old Comrade'", in *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 61, Moscow, 1953, p. 196 (in Russian).

In 1849 Herzen himself held similar views. In his *Letters from France*, he wrote: "Social changes are never ready prior to the conflicts; only the negation of the old order is ready; the struggle is the real birth of social concepts and it changes these concepts from pure abstractions into vital forces, and from theoretical musings into real institutions." But, all that was 20 years ago. "The ordeals ... have affected both of us but differently," Herzen wrote to Bakunin. "You have not changed much, though sorely tried by life. I got off with a few bruises. But you were far away while I was right there. And if I have changed, remember that *everything has changed*." ¹

In this altered world Bakunin still saw a certain constant factor: a powerful popular institution in the form of the people's constant readiness to revolt.

Those principles, which formed both men's basis for their estimation of the popular potential for revolution, were diametrically opposed. For Bakunin, the people were "socialist", thanks to their situation and instinct. And for Herzen, the people were instinctively conservative.

In developing this final concept, Herzen explained it further by saying that the peasants, ignorant of other lifestyles, simply could not have any ideals outside the existing order. Anything new they could accept "only if it is clad in the old raiments". "Pugachov, in order to overthrow German influence in Russia, called himself Peter, the most German of them all." And thus it was not only in Russia. "Neither the republic of Robespierre, nor that of Anacharsis Cloots, left to themselves, could maintain while Vendéeism took years to extirpate." ²

The masses, as Herzen rightly noted, are suspicious of prophets who "do not come from the people but from schools, from books, from literature" and of those who issue a call to arms. "The priest and the aristocrat, the policeman and the merchant, the

¹ Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, p. 576.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 590, 591.

proprietor and the soldier, have more direct contacts with the masses than they.”¹

Bakunin himself partially understood this conservative peasant lifestyle and the conservative peasant mind, but he erred in overestimating the significance of social instincts, seeing in this striving for land and freedom an elemental, centuries-old consciousness, aimed at destroying all state institutions. In a polemic with Herzen dealing with the propagandising of similar concepts, Bakunin wrote: “You say ... that since the masses are not yet ready for implementing such ideas, then it is impractical to proclaim them now. I don’t agree with you. These concepts have their own future, precisely because they live, as they have always lived, elementally, in the demands of the masses.”²

The people, according to Bakunin’s doctrine, are the antithesis of the state government, rejecting it absolutely and living their own life which is in no way connected with government statute.

Herzen objected to such opposition by saying: “The state, church and army may be as logically rejected as theology, metaphysics, etc. They have been condemned in a certain sphere of science, but beyond the walls of academia they possess all kinds of moral strength...

“One cannot fight against false dogmas, against superstitions no matter how insane they are, simply by denying them, no matter how much sense there is in this denial. To say ‘I do not believe’ carries just as much weight and is, at bottom, just as ridiculous, as saying ‘I believe!’. The old order of things is stronger than are the material forces that support it because it is recognised.”³

A call to destroy that was not accompanied by a well-founded programme of creation and readily available forces and means was something Herzen could not accept. His call “To the people!” carried

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 590.

² *Letters from M. A. Bakunin to A. I. Herzen and N. P. Ogarev*, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. 312 (in Russian).

³ Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, p. 580.

a different sense. As far back as the beginning of the 1860s *The Bell* called for preparing teachers, prophets of science who could teach the people.

This approach to the work of the youth among the people was referred to by Bakunin as "doctrine, scholarly debauchery". "Teach the people? That would be stupid. The people themselves know better than we do what they need. Just the opposite is true; we have to learn from them and understand the secrets of their life and strength... We have to rouse the people, not teach them."¹

In these words Bakunin essentially formulated the methodology of the movement. Its goal was, in Bakunin's opinion, the "fundamental destruction of all orders, social forces, means, things and people upon which the strength of the empire is founded,"²

"You tear along, as before, filled with the passion of destruction, which you take for creative passion ... breaking down obstacles and respecting only the history of the future," such was Herzen's answer, for whom a respect, of both the past and the present, of a vital, popular lifestyle was one of the major tenets of his sociological theories. The problem facing those who are moving ahead was, according to Herzen, to understand the "march of mankind" and not to forcibly free them, but to quietly gather forces and in this way help the people "attain their age of majority". The state "cannot, up to a certain age, be discarded as one discards old clothes"; "you cannot free the people externally more than they are free internally". You can't create a new world using force and terror. "Even if the whole bourgeois world were blown to bits, *some sort of bourgeois world* would arise after the smoke had dissipated and the ruins had been cleared away, though somewhat modified, because that world is *not yet dead* internally and *also because neither the world* that builds nor the new

¹ M. A. Bakunin, "Formulating the Revolutionary Question", *op. cit.*, p. 471.

² *Ibid.*, p. 469.

organisation are yet so ready as to be able to perfect themselves as they come into being.”¹

What alternatives could Herzen offer to counter Bakunin's destructive aspirations, and on what forces was he proposing to place his bets in this historical moment?

In the labour movement, united by the International Association of Workers, Herzen saw the potential forces for rebuilding society. He considered that the unified world of workers could present an ultimatum to a “world which profits but does not work” and if the latter did not agree, then its downfall “would be postponed only until the new world gathered sufficient strength”. And until then, “forces must be gathered and no threats must be made”.² And new forms for the future organisation of society must be found, forms which would contain “all elements of contemporary activity and all human aspirations.”

You can destroy by force, but revolution is not only an act of destruction; it must also be a force for “building”. If it is true that Bakunin's revolutionary activity was focused on the present, then Herzen's was, in large measure, addressed to the future, to that time when the consciousness of the masses would be guided by revolutionary theory. In terms of the present, Herzen considered that “our strength is in the power of ideas, the power of truth and words and the patterned development of history.”³

* * *

On 22 January 1870, the Paris morning newspapers carried the announcement of Herzen's death and the information that the funeral would take place at 11 a. m. on 27 January. All the same, the police, fearing political demonstrations, gave the order to remove the coffin at 10 a. m. The funeral procession was small at first, but increased in size along the way to the

¹ Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, pp. 587, 591, 578.

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book 2, p. 582.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 588.

Père-Lachaise cemetery, until, according to the eyewitness account given by Georgi Vyrubov, it numbered about 500. Behind the bier of this great democrat, in addition to his closest relatives and few Russian friends followed crowds of workers carrying their children and finely dressed ladies and gentlemen. Each person wore a small bouquet of red immortelles. When the coffin had been placed next to the crypt, Vyrubov turned to the crowd. "Citizens!" he said, "Herzen's family, in accordance with his own wishes, have asked that no speeches be made here at the graveside. And in spite of the fact how unusual and painful is this mute farewell to a man who was one of the most remarkable personalities of European democracy, we will respect his wish ...

Russia will wear no mourning for this great citizen who has done so much for his homeland and to whom we have come here to pay our last respects. Only a small number of friends who remained loyal to him will wear the mourning bands in their hearts. But, the day will come and his compatriots *will come* to better understand their history and will recall then this lonely grave. And here on his gravestone they will raise a monument, and on this monument they will engrave these words: 'To a great citizen and exile, Alexander Herzen, from a grateful Russia'." ¹

After Vyrubov's final words, Pierre Malardier, a former member of the Constituent Assembly of 1848 tossed a bouquet of red immortelles onto the coffin and loudly proclaimed: "To the Voltaire of the 19th century!"

Other red bouquets rained down from all sides and quickly covered the coffin. And the monument to Herzen, designed by the sculptor P. P. Zabello, was erected not in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, but in Nice, where A. A. Herzen, following the terms of his father's will, later re-interred the ashes. E. S. Nekrasova, who was responsible for Herzen's archives left a description of the path to the plot where he lies next to Natalya Alexandrovna. "Herzen's grave is hidden from view...; it has blended in with the other

¹ *La Marseillaise*, Paris, 25 January 1870, No. 38.

graves. And it's not easy to get to either; to do so you must pass by those graves of Garibaldi's mother and father, and keeping them to your left, you descend slightly, always keeping to the left along the green ledges, to the smaller, lower squares. The visitor's attention is drawn to the left by a tall, luxurious and dark cypress, and still to the left not far from it you will see, on a high marble base, the dark-grey bronze life-size statue of Herzen, who stands in a characteristic pose, arms crossed on his chest."¹

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works and Letters*, Ed. by M. K. Lemke, Vol. XXI, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923, p. 561 (in Russian).

MIKHAIL BAKUNIN, "A SMOULDERING FIRE"

"The name 'Bakunin' is a still smouldering fire, one that perhaps has not yet flared... Bureaucratic officials grow vexed and grimace, but we read Bakunin and listen to the hiss of the fire."¹ Thus wrote the Russian poet Alexander Blok about the famous Russian revolutionary. In his laconic poetic style, Blok described the nature of this eminent figure: "To search for god, and then deny him; to be a gloomy 'nihilist', yet believe in one's actions as did Alexander of Macedon or Napoleon; to despise all established customs, beginning with state order and social systems and ending with the roof over one's own home, food, clothing, and sleep — Bakunin did not just talk about these things, he did them."²

Let us briefly discuss the more important revolutionary activities of this man.

On 14 February 1848 Polish emigrants gathered in Brussels to honour the memory of the slain Decembrists and Szymon Konarski, the Polish patriot executed in 1839. As was the custom of those living in exile, the shades of the martyrs, represented by wreaths of immortelle bearing the names of Pavel Pestel, Kondraty Ryleyev, Mikhail Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Sergei Muravyov-Apostol, Petr Kakhovsky and Szymon Konarski, were to chair the meeting.

¹ A. Blok, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow-Leningrad, 1962, p. 31 (in Russian).

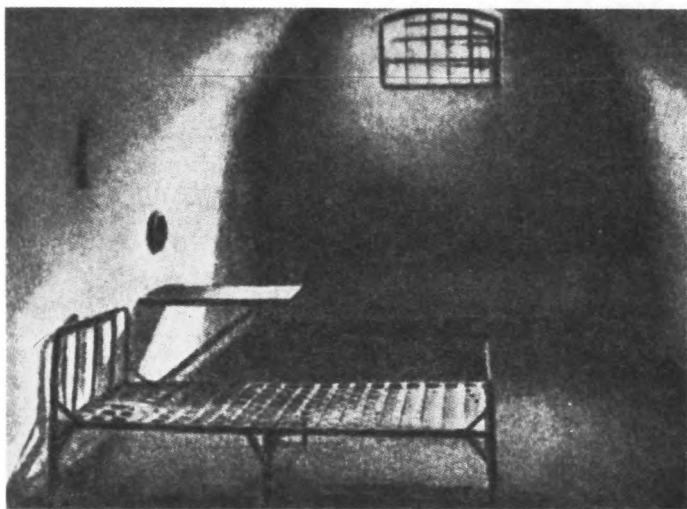
² *Ibid.*, p. 34.



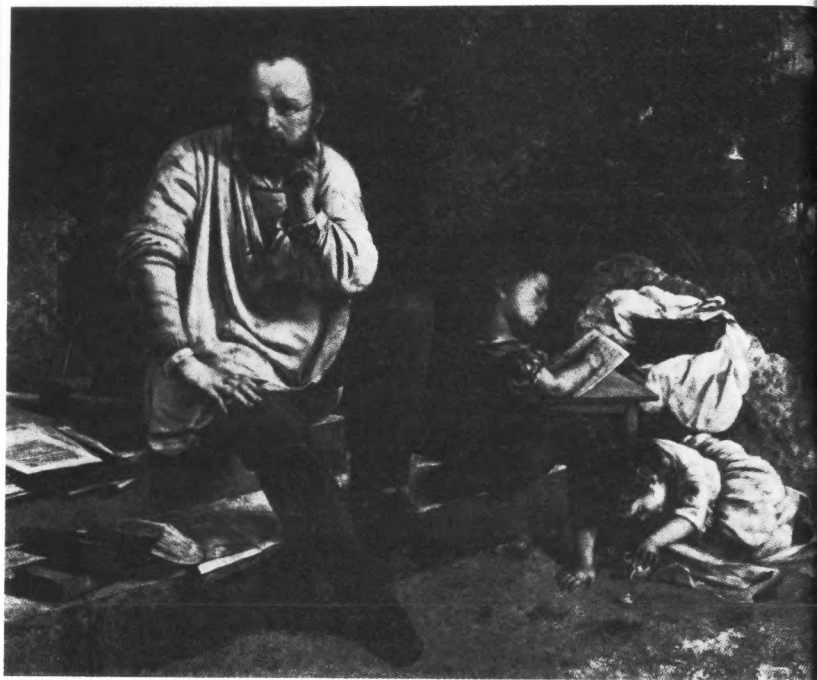
Mikhail Bakunin. Self-portrait.
1838



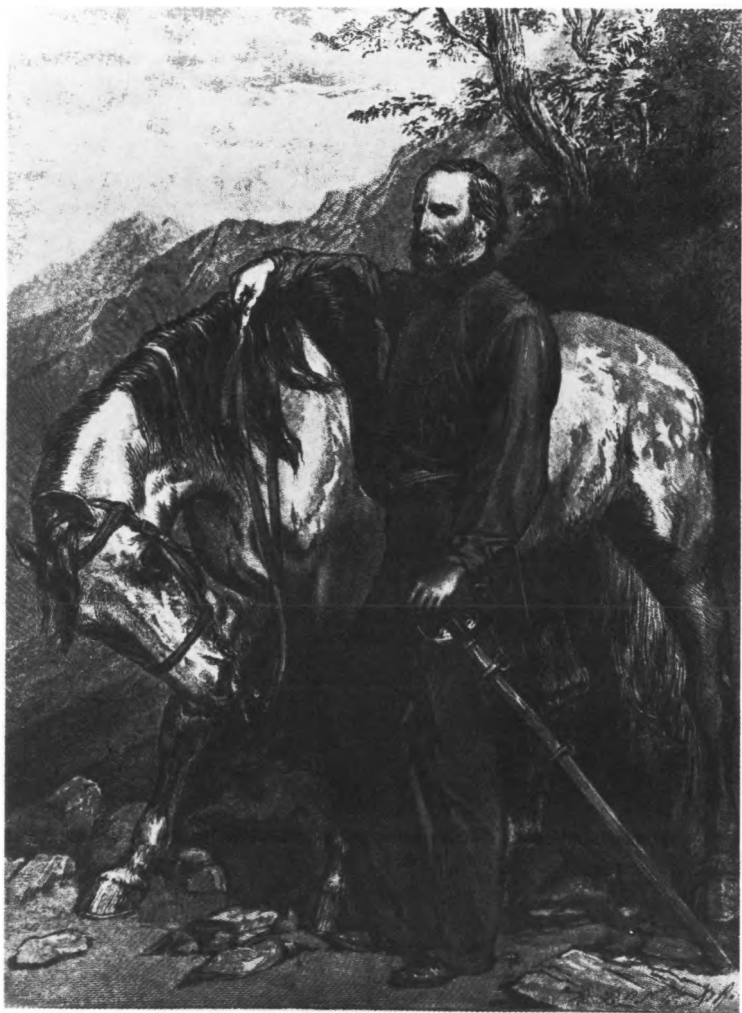
Wilhelm Weitling. Portrait. 1840s
The May uprising in Dresden,
1849. The storming of the
arsenal



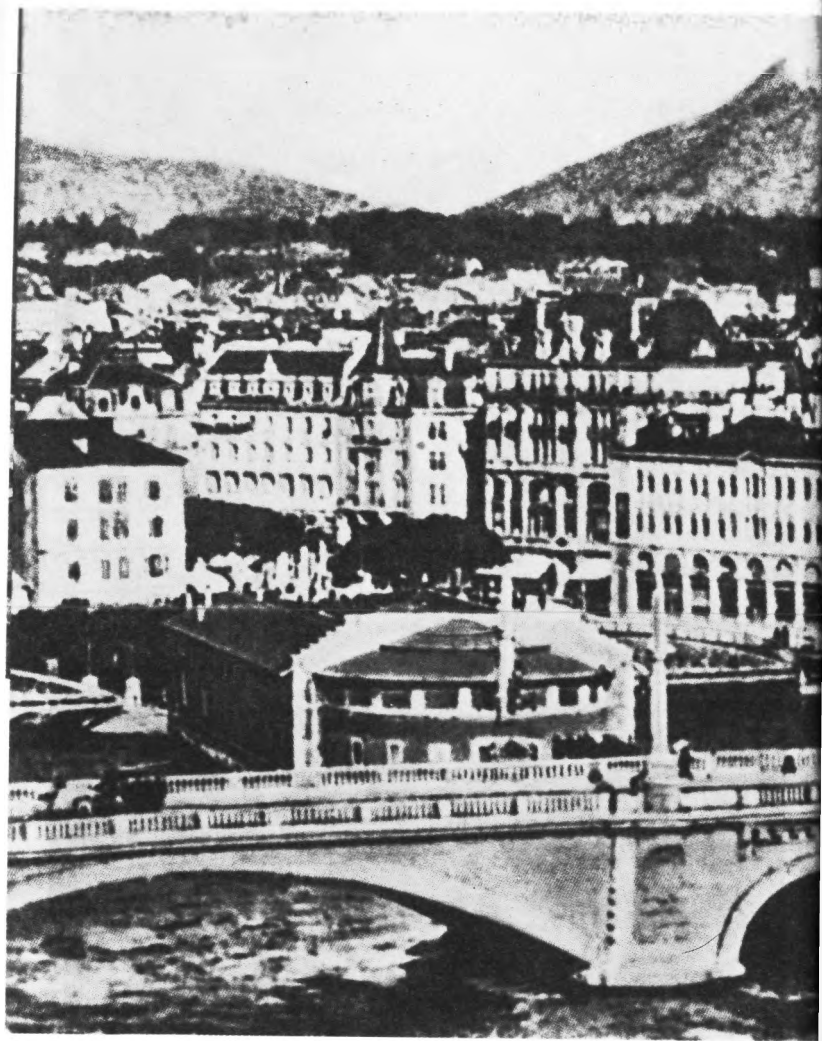
Giuseppe Mazzini. 1849
Mikhail Bakunin's cell in the
Shlisselburg Fortress



Pierre Joseph Proudhon with his
children. Portrait by Gustave
Courbet. 1865



Giuseppe Garibaldi. From a
lithograph of 1861



Geneva. Second half of the 19th century

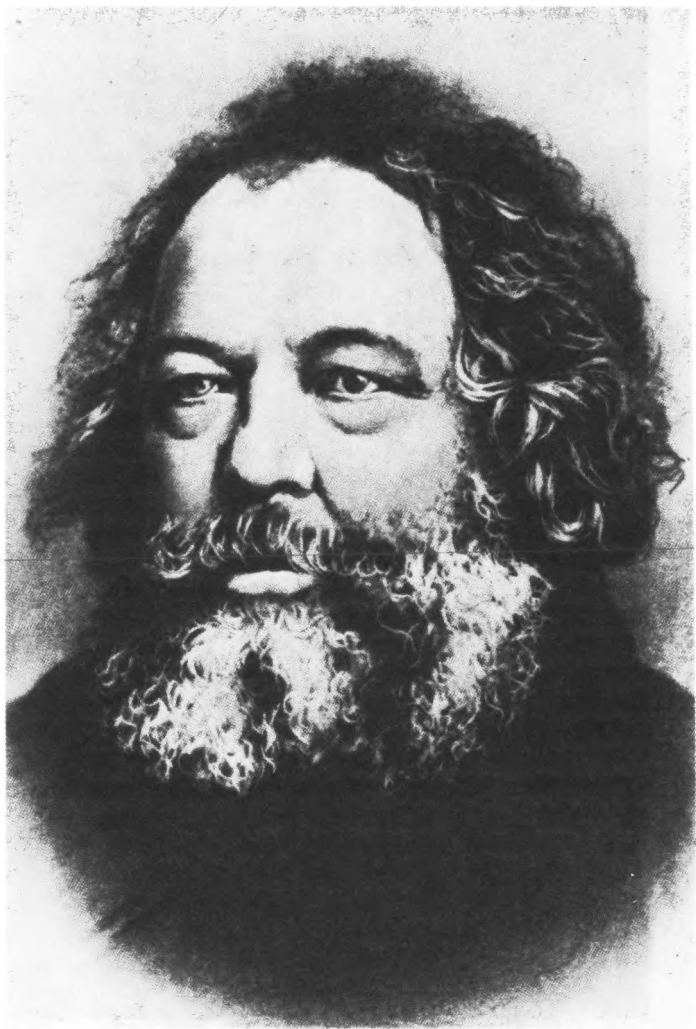




Florence. Second half of
the 19th century

Mikhail Sazhin
(revolutionary alias:
Arman Ross). Photograph.
Late 1860s





Mikhail Bakunin. 1870



Bakunin's grave in Bern

Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, Russian revolutionary and fighter for the liberation of the Slav peoples, was given the honour of addressing the meeting dedicated to the Russo-Polish revolutionary alliance. He ended his speech by calling for each to fulfill his duty when the time came. The time came in less than two weeks.

On 23 February revolution broke out in Paris. On the 26th, Bakunin was already in the city. According to Alexander Herzen, "he plunged, head over ears, into all the depths and shallows of the revolutionary sea. He never left the barracks of the Montagnards, slept with them, ate with them and preached ... communism and *l'égalité du salaire*, levelling-down in the name of equality, the emancipation of all the Slavs, the destruction of all the Austrias, the revolution *en permanence*, war to the extinction of the last foe. Caussidière, the prefect from the barricades engaged in bringing 'order into chaos', did not know how to get rid of the precious orator, and plotted with Flocon to send him off to the Slavs in earnest, with a brotherly *accolade* and a conviction that there he would break his neck and be no more trouble. '*Quel homme! Quel homme!*' Caussidière used to say of Bakunin: 'On the first day of the revolution he is simply a treasure, but on the day after he ought to be shot!'"¹

Though the story is told with irony, it essentially conformed with reality. Bakunin himself later wrote in his *Confession* that the month he spent in Paris was a time of "spiritual drunkenness".

"I awoke at five or four in the morning and went to bed at two. All day long I was on my feet, taking part absolutely in all meetings, gatherings, clubs, processions, promenades, and demonstrations; in a word, with all my senses and through all my pores I absorbed the intoxicating revolutionary atmosphere. It was an endless banquet. I saw everyone and I saw no one, for everything was lost in one huge moving crowd; I spoke with everyone and did not

¹ *My Past and Thoughts. The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, Vol. V. Chatto & Windus, London, 1926, pp. 133-34.

remember what I said to them or what was said to me, because at every step of the way there were new things, new adventures and new information.”¹

But caught as he was in the raptures of freedom, Bakunin did not forget Russia. It was his hope that the wave of revolution would sweep over all of Europe, making its way to his homeland as well.

On 13 March, when the revolution had not yet crossed the border of France, Bakunin placed an article in the newspaper *La Réforme* that predicted swift revolution in all the countries of Europe: “The revolutionary movement will not end until Europe, all of Europe, not excepting even Russia, becomes a confederate democratic republic. ‘Impossible!’ they say. But let them beware! This word belongs not to today, but to yesterday. Today all that is impossible is monarchy, aristocracy, inequality and slavery... This revolution, which is to save all the peoples, will save Russia too. I am convinced of this.”²

Bakunin’s prophesy began to be fulfilled two days after his article was published, when revolution broke out in Austria. Even more confident in the accuracy of his other predictions, Bakunin decided to move closer to the Russian border in order to conduct propaganda there among the Poles.

As always, Bakunin was without funds for this undertaking. He turned to the members of the French Provisional Government with a request for two thousands francs. He received the money and a passport from Caussidière, who had assumed the post of police prefect after the revolution. On 31 March 1848 he took a stagecoach for Strasbourg. He later wrote in his *Confession*: “If someone in the stagecoach had asked me the purpose of my visit and I had wanted to answer, the following conversation might have ensued:

‘Why are you going there?’

‘I’m going to rebel.

‘Against whom?’

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin’s Biography*, Vol. 1, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923, pp. 130-31 (in Russian).

² *La Réforme*, Paris, 13 March 1848.

'Tsar Nicholas'.

'How will you do this?'

'I don't really know yet.'

'Where are you going right now?'

'To the duchy of Poznan'.

'Why there?'

'Because the Poles say there is more life and action there, and because it will be easier to influence events in the Kingdom of Poland from there than from Galicia!

'How much money do you have?'

'Two thousand francs.'

'Do you have prospects for receiving more money?'

'Nothing specific, but maybe.'

'Do you have any acquaintances or connections in the duchy of Poznan?'

'Save for a few young people that I met with rather often at the Berlin University, I know no one.'

'Do you have any letters of introduction?'

'None.'

'How are you going to fight the Russian tsar without any money?'

'The revolution is with me, and I hope to come out of my solitude in Poznan.'" ¹

During his journey Bakunin stopped for several days in Frankfurt, Cologne, and Leipzig. He had hoped to observe the same revolutionary upsurge he had witnessed in France, but the Germans were very different from the emotional French. Bakunin did not see any cheering crowds with red banners or any barricades either in Frankfurt or Cologne. "How strange!" he wrote to Pavel Annenkov. "A large part of Germany is in disorder but without its own revolution, something that does not prevent the Germans from drinking their Rhine wine and talking about '*Unsere Revolution*'" ²

Bakunin was also not very happy with the Poles, who gathered in large numbers in Breslau. He stayed here more than a month, but without any significant

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 140.

² M. A. Bakunin, *Collected Works and Letters*, Vol. 3, 1935, p. 297 (in Russian).

success. Inner discord among the Poles and cautious mistrust of some of the emigrants hindered unification. Under these circumstances, the Slavs decided to hold a congress in order to rally their forces. "At last," Bakunin wrote, "there is talk of a Slav congress. I have decided to go to Prague in hopes of finding there Archimedes' place to stand for action."¹

Prague was one of the centres of the national liberation movement that had engulfed the entire Austrian Empire. After the victory of the revolution in Vienna, the Czechs petitioned the government for restoring the Kingdom of Bohemia. A government headed by František Palacký was organised in Prague, but the tasks it set were purely national, or more precisely, nationalistic. At the same time, the Hungarian Slavs who had gathered for a congress in Zagreb also demanded national self-determination.

The many years of German rule and the oppression of the Slavs in Austria created a situation where the Slav national movement was unwilling to join with the revolutionary movement of the Germans and Magyars. The experience of history had been too bitter, and socio-economic relations in the Habsburg Empire were very undeveloped.

After arriving in Prague, Bakunin was elected a member of the congress's diplomatic committee. The sessions, which had begun on 2 June 1848, were disrupted on the 12th by an uprising of Czech and Austrian workers, craftsmen and students. Austrian Field Marshal Prince Alfred Windisch-Graetz had done everything he could to incite the uprising in order to use his superior strength to crush the forces of democracy. Barricades went up in the streets of Prague. Peasant units tried to join the insurrectionists, but government troops blocked the roads. A fierce battle waged for five days. One by one the barricades fell to the Austrian artillery. On 17 June the uprising was crushed.

Bakunin wrote: "I was in Prague right up to the surrender, fulfilling the services of a volunteer: I walked from one barricade to another carrying a gun ...

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 144.

I fired. But I was more like a guest in all this, and I didn't expect any significant results. However, in the end I advised the students and other participants to overthrow the Town Hall, which had been conducting secret negotiations with Prince Windisch-Graetz for four days, and to replace it with a military committee with dictatorial power. They wanted to follow my advice but it was too late: Prague surrendered."¹

The wave of revolution was receding in many countries in Europe. France was in the grip of terror, and counter-revolutionary forces were victorious in Vienna and Prague. Reactionaries gained influence in Germany as well, where revolutionary forces were especially weak and the opposition of the Burghers was insignificant. Having witnessed the situation in Berlin first-hand, Bakunin expected nothing from the Germans. It was his opinion that official German reactionaries and official German revolutionaries rivaled each other in banality and stupidity. The German authorities, in turn, were very hostile towards the Russian revolutionary. He was driven out of each city where he attempted to stay. By chance he managed to remain in Köthen, and it was here that he wrote "Appeal to the Slavs".

Not wishing to tackle social issues, Bakunin specifically addressed the national and revolutionary struggle of the Slavs. He suggested that the Slavs no longer remain confined within a narrow national movement, that they join with the Magyars in a revolutionary alliance and lend assistance to the German people.

Bakunin's appeal was timely, for the armies headed by Josef Jellačić and Prince Windisch-Graetz that were marching against revolutionary Vienna were composed of predominantly Slavic troops. The appeal made a convincing and passionate plea for revolution: "Look! The Revolution is all around. It alone is powerful. The new spirit with its ability to dissolve has irrevocably penetrated humanity; it is burrowing into and overturning the deepest and darkest layers of European society. And the Revolution will not rest

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

until it has completely destroyed the old dislocated world and created in its place a new and better world. Thus all the vigour and strength, all the certainty of triumph is in it and only in it. In it alone is life; outside it is death.”¹

Bakunin believed the revolution would be the strongest in Russia: “In Moscow the slavery of all Slav peoples united now under the Russian sceptre and all European slavery as well will be destroyed and buried for eternity under its own garbage and ruins; in Moscow, the constellation of revolution will ascend out of a sea of blood and flames and will become the guiding star for the good of all liberated mankind.”²

Bakunin’s “Appeal” was published as a brochure in Leipzig, and was rather widely read in Germany, Bohemia, and Poland. In French, “Appeal” was published in *La Réforme*. The preface included these words about Bakunin: “...This is a man of unwavering conviction, of extraordinary courage and activity... Here our friend examines the European question that is now being debated in Germany and on the banks of the Danube with a depth of views and from a position that is totally new for us: at the same time, he teaches the Slavs revolutionary practice. We German and French democrats who are extremely interested in the fight that has begun on the Danube can draw some lessons from it.”³

While European democracy welcomed the “Appeal”, reactionary forces in Austria and Russia were alarmed. Austrian authorities instigated the legal prosecution of the brochure and its author, who was accused of high treason.

In Russia, Leonty Dubelt, chief of staff of the Separate Corps of Gendarmes, wrote the chief of the gendarmes, Count Alexei Orlov: “I was horrified to read Bakunin’s poisonous remarks, and forgive me, Your Excellency, if I dare to say that it would be

¹ *La Réforme*, Paris, 14 January 1849.

² M. A. Bakunin, *Collected Works and Letters*, Vol. 3, pp. 359-60.

³ *La Réforme*, Paris, 1 January 1849.

unforgivable if our embassies did not take secret measures to detain and bring him to Russia." Orlov wrote on this report: "I personally informed the emperor of this, telling His Majesty that not only did I not have the heart to bring him these disgusting words, I myself loathed to read them."¹

While his friends and enemies were reading his "Appeal", Bakunin continued his revolutionary activities. He now had his mind set on Bohemia (Czechia), where the condition of the peasants toiling to fulfil feudal obligations was extremely difficult and where there were many factory workers, who, Bakunin believed, were "summoned by fate to be the recruits for democratic propaganda".

After inciting a revolution in Bohemia, Bakunin planned to tear down and burn all castles, to destroy all government offices and all promissory notes and to make Bohemia a revolutionary centre that would summon all the Slav tribes as well as the Magyars and the Germans to the struggle.

According to Bakunin, the revolutionary government was to be invested with "unlimited dictatorial power"; all "counter-forces" were to be driven out and destroyed with the exception of a few of the more important officials who would remain for advice and statistical reports; "... all clubs and magazines are to be destroyed as well... The youth and all capable people, divided into categories according to character, ability and the orientation of each will be sent throughout the entire region in order to provide it with a provisional revolutionary and military organisation."²

Bakunin's premise was that since the revolution was necessary, it was possible; however, he had neither the money nor the connections to carry out a revolution. But he didn't consider this an obstacle. After meeting Emanuel Arnold, a Czech democrat, Bakunin instructed him to organise a secret society first in Prague and then throughout Bohemia. "The society

¹ M. A. Bakunin, *Collected Works and Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 535.

² *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 200.

was to consist of three separate, independent from each other and unknown to each other, societies... one ... for the petty bourgeoisie; one for the youth; one more for the villages. Each was to be subjected to a strict hierarchy and unconditional discipline... All three societies were to be linked together by a Central Committee which would be composed of three, at the most five, members: myself, Arnold, and the others to be selected."¹

Arnold accepted the mission and left for Prague. After a long period during which he received no news, Bakunin followed his emissary to Prague. Here he discovered that the Czech democrats had no real desire to follow his instructions. Unable to remain in Prague to provide personal leadership since he was being hunted by the Austrian police, Bakunin needed new trusted emissaries. He soon found them in the persons of the brothers Gustav and Adolf Straka. Bakunin had met them in Leipzig where a circle of Czech students was selflessly devoted to him as a teacher and carefully listened to his every word. After arriving in Dresden from Prague, Bakunin decided to send two of these students to Bohemia to organise the secret societies.

While Bakunin was waiting in Dresden for news from Bohemia, revolutionary discontent, generated by the unwillingness of the Saxon government to accept the imperial constitution that had been written by the Frankfurt Parliament, began to spread. Popular demonstrations were held in the city; the soldiers opened fire, and the first victims fell. On 3 May barricades went up in the streets of Dresden, and the king fled. A provisional government was set up that was composed of two constitutional party representatives, Otto Heubner and Karl Todt, and a democrat, Samuel Tzschirner.

By a twist of fate, Bakunin, busy trying to organise a revolution in Bohemia, unexpectedly became one of the central figures in the Dresden uprising. At that time he knew little about the German situation, but it was impossible for him not to become involved

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, p. 208.

in a revolution, regardless of where it was taking place. He described his state of mind this way: "For a long time I didn't know what to do, for a long time I could not decide on anything: it seemed dangerous to stay, but it would have been a disgrace to flee; that was quite impossible. I was the chief and only instigator of the Prague, both German and Czech conspiracy. I had sent the Straka brothers to Prague thereby exposing many people there to dangers, so I myself had no right to flee danger." ¹

On the first day of the uprising Bakunin advised Tzschirner not to waste time and to immediately take over the city and seize the arsenal. But the Provisional Government did not act on this advice, and the next day the armed Burghers went home, unwilling now to continue the struggle. When he realised the weakness of the insurrectionists, Tzschirner asked Bakunin for help. Bakunin agreed upon the condition that if the uprising in Dresden were successful, a republic would be declared which would then render assistance to the uprising in Bohemia. Together with the two assistants, Poles Wiktor Heltman and Alexandr Krzyzanowski, Bakunin took over a screened-off corner of the room where the Government met. "Our situation was very strange: we were a kind of staff for the Provisional Government, which unquestioningly fulfilled our every demand; but Senior Lieutenant Alexander Heinze, who had assumed the post of head of the national guard, acted and issued commands to the revolutionary volunteer corps independently of us." ²

For one entire day and night Bakunin insisted that Heinze give him 500 or at least 300 men whom he himself would lead to storm the arsenal. But he never received a detachment. Then on 6 May Bakunin and Heubner went to the barricades. When they realised the danger of the situation and the weakness of the resistance, the Poles (Heltman and Krzyzanowski) fled the city. Tzschirner and Todt followed their example, but Bakunin stayed. He and Heubner

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

were essentially the only remaining members of the government. Saxon and Prussian soldiers attacked the weakly defended barricades, where the situation was chaotic thanks to the military leadership of Heinze.

For Bakunin these were difficult days. He did everything he could in order to "save the faltering and, no doubt, dying revolution. I didn't sleep, eat, drink, or even smoke; I exhausted myself... Several times I called together the heads of the barricades, I tried to restore order and to gather our forces for an offensive; but Heinze destroyed my plans at their inception, so all my tense and fevered activity was in vain."¹

"The Saxon investigation committee," wrote Bakunin, "was surprised later that I allowed myself to be taken, that I made no effort to save myself. In fact, I could have slipped away from the burghers, but I was exhausted and fatigued, not only in body but even more so morally. I was completely indifferent about what would happen to me. I only destroyed my pocket book along the road, and hoped ... I would be shot in a few days. I feared only one thing: to be handed over to the Russian Government."²

Bakunin's fear was legitimate, but it was not realised immediately. The first two years of his imprisonment he spent in prisons in Saxony and Austria. This was a time about which he could say, borrowing the words of the famous revolutionary Vera Figner, who spent twenty years in Shlisselburg: the clock of life stopped. Bakunin was subjected to a long series of interrogations and sentenced to death (six months later the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment). He was shackled and turned over to Russian authorities on 17 May 1851. On the 23rd he was already a prisoner in the secret and terrible Alexeyevsky Ravelin in the Peter and Paul Fortress.

Bakunin was horrified that he might be forgotten for 10-20 years — for the rest of his life — here in this stony cell. No one came the first six weeks; he wasn't even interrogated. But in the beginning of

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, p. 244.

² *Ibid.*

July 1851, Count Orlov himself, the head of the gendarmes, came to Bakunin's cell and in the name of the tsar demanded that the prisoner relate in detail and without concealment what he knew about the Slav and German movements and reveal his own connections. Despondent over the possibility of ever leaving the four walls of his gloomy cell, Bakunin suddenly saw a glimmer of hope, and he agreed to write the tsar. What he intended to do was simple: to tell everything that had been revealed during his interrogation by the Austrian authorities and confess to the Russian authorities everything that was known from the press, and everything that was not known but that concerned only his own activities. He would not name anyone who had not yet been discovered or could in any way be compromised. He would tell his sworn enemy about his thoughts, plans and reasoning, but in such a way that the tsar would accept and understand them. This was the idea behind his *Confession*, a document that many later historians thought compromised Bakunin. But Bakunin thought it possible to teach his enemy, to show him the essence of his policies and their results, and also to hope for a lighter sentence. Possibly, Bakunin's tie with the generation of noble revolutionaries played a factor here. The Decembrists did not lack the civic courage but they believed it possible to speak frankly with the tsar in an effort to convince him of their just cause. At that time there was no other established way to deal with the tsarist court. New attitudes were not formed until the 1860s. We may assume that despite all his revolutionary activities, Bakunin the nobleman considered it appropriate to thus approach the first nobleman of the empire.

Confession is a difficult document to fathom. Bakunin later described it to Herzen as part truth and part conjecture, and this is the key to understanding it. There is more truth than falsity in the account. For example, the "repentant sinner's" account accurately describes his activities in the West and the revolution in France, and there is a frank discussion of the "noble workers", Russia's position and its internal and foreign policies.

Who would have dared to tell Tsar Nicholas I this truth: "When you travel around the world you encounter much evil, oppression and lies; in Russia, perhaps, more than in any other state. This is not because people in Russia are any worse than those in Western Europe; on the contrary, I believe that the Russian is a better, kinder, more generous person than the westerner. But the West has a medicine against evil: publicity, public opinion, and, finally, the freedom that ennobles and elevates every individual. This medicine is absent in Russia. Thus Western Europe sometimes appears worse because every evil comes to the surface, little remains secret. In Russia all sicknesses sink inward, eating away at the very inner structure of the social organism. In Russia the prime mover is fear, but fear kills all life, all intelligence, all noble actions of the soul... Russian social life is a chain of mutual oppression: the higher oppresses the lower, who, not daring to complain, tolerates it, but in turn bears down upon someone even lower... The common people, the poor *muzhik* has it worst of all; himself at the very bottom of the social ladder, he is unable to oppress anyone lower and must tolerate the oppression from everyone..."

After describing the bribery and venality of the entire bureaucracy and also the fear of the government functionaries before the tsar, Bakunin continued: "Fear itself is not effective. Other medicines are needed to counter such evil: noble feelings, independent thought, the proud courage of a clear conscience, respect for human dignity in oneself and others, and, finally, public disgust for all dishonest and inhumane people, a sense of public shame and public conscience! But these qualities ... flourish only where there is free space for the soul, not where slavery and fear are dominant; these virtues are apprehended in Russia not because they are not loved but out of fear that together with them free thought might appear..."

These excerpts are more reminiscent of a journalistic article to be published in an uncensored press than a repentance. This is the truth in *Confession*, but there are some inventions as well. Basically these are shown in two lines: anti-German (or anti-European

in general) and pan-Slavic. Bakunin may indeed be reproached for these parts of the document, but he is also to be credited for his perspicacity. He calculated correctly. Tsar Nicholas I thought favourably of Bakunin's criticism of the corruption and lack of faith in the West.

"Striking truth", the tsar wrote in the margin next to these lines. But Bakunin's plea for the tsar to unite all the Slavs under his aegis and head the Slav movement was met ironically: "I have no doubt," Tsar Nicholas wrote, "in other words, I should head the revolution as a Slav Mazaniello. Thank you."¹

Bakunin writes to the tsar in a conversational tone: "I think that there is more need for dictatorial power in Russia than anywhere else. This power should be used exclusively to elevate and enlighten the common masses — power free in direction and spirit but without parliamentary form; power allowing publication of books of unrestricted content, but not allowing of freedom of publishing; power surrounded by like-minded individuals, illuminated by their light and strengthened by their free assistance, but not restricted by anyone or anything."

Bakunin's power scheme of enlightened absolutism was also a fabrication, but it sounded like advice to the tsar. There are many such arguments in *Confession*. As always, Bakunin was teaching and preaching.

It is interesting to note the role *Confession* played in Bakunin's overall strategy since the time of his arrest. From the very beginning his tactics had been not to compromise his fellow revolutionaries and not to conceal anything about his own political beliefs. On the whole, Bakunin followed this plan while in the Alexeyevsky Ravelin. It is our opinion that the revolutionary's naive efforts to persuade the tsar that the Slav world could be organised along revolutionary principles that maintained a ruler's absolute power, the clever compliments he paid to Tsar Nicholas, and his "repentance", considering the historical circumstances, did not compromise his integrity.

¹ *Materials for Mikhail Bakunin's Biography*, Vol. 1, pp. 162, 163, 165.

Bakunin's small hope of receiving a lighter sentence was not realised; he would have to endure another six years of solitary confinement. It was not until the absolute power took on somewhat milder forms during the reign of Tsar Alexander II that Bakunin's imprisonment was replaced by exile in Siberia. He lived almost seven years in Tomsk and Irkutsk before making a daring escape that led him along the Amur River from Irkutsk to Nikolayevsk, then to San Francisco by way of Japan, and, finally, across the ocean to London. Here Herzen, who assisted in the escape, was waiting for him.

For a short time Bakunin worked on the publication of *Kolokol* (The Bell) put out by Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev. But the revolutionaries had different viewpoints, and in early 1864 Bakunin left England for Italy.

While still in Siberia Bakunin had married the daughter of an exiled Pole, Ksaverij Kwiatkowski. His wife, Antonina, arrived safely in Western Europe almost two years after his escape. The first person the Bakunins visited in Italy was Giuseppe Garibaldi. The hero of Italy greeted his guests warmly and impressed them with his simplicity. "He works in his garden himself," Bakunin wrote, "and though it is not magnificent, it is extremely interesting, because he planted everything himself."

The Bakunins spent a few days on Caprera. Bakunin showed more and more interest in the world surrounding Garibaldi. "There is no property here: everything belongs to everyone," he wrote in one of his letters. "... everyone walks around in heavy broadcloth jackets open at the neck, wearing red shirts with rolled-up sleeves. All are black from the sun, work amicably together and sing. Among them Garibaldi — majestic, calm, with a diffident smile, alone clean and white in this black and perhaps somewhat unkempt crowd, with a deep yet serene melancholy evident in all his expressions — makes an inexpressibly striking impression."

Speaking further about Garibaldi's kindness, Bakunin writes that not only people but all living things felt it: animals, flowers, trees. "He loves his two

bulls, his cows, calves and sheep; and they all know him. He only has to appear and they all go to him. He has a soft touch and kind word for each one." As for his deep secret sadness, it "must have been the same sadness Jesus felt when he said: 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.'" This is the sadness of this mature man who has dedicated his entire life to liberating and humanising mankind. But even the greatest and most fortunate people do not attain their goals. Still, it is necessary to try and to pull the world forward along with you."¹

Bakunin understood Garibaldi's sadness, but he still had an abundance of faith in his own ideas and resources; he still believed he was one of those who could and should "pull the world forward along with him". Was Bakunin's path really "forward?" In a certain sense — yes. After all before building a new world the old one must be destroyed. This was what Bakunin set out to do. "Let my friends build; I want only to destroy, for I am convinced that using rotting material to build on carrion is wasted labour, and that new living materials, together with new organisms, can appear only out of grand destruction... In all respects our century is a transitional, unhappy century; and we who are cut off from the old and not attached to the new are unhappy people. Let's carry our unhappiness with dignity; it will not help us to complain, and let's destroy as much as we can."² These words, written in early 1864, reflect a determined thoughtfulness, a conscious direction. Bakunin was not calling for mindless destruction, but for voluntarily taking upon himself a difficult task for the sake of creating new social structures.

Bakunin did not discuss these things with Garibaldi. His objectives in Italy were more concrete and simple: to form an alliance between Garibaldi and the Poles, and, if possible, to persuade the Italian leader to take direct part in the Polish uprising.

¹ "Letters from M. A. Bakunin to Countess Evgenia Salias", *Letopisi marksizma* (Chronicles of Marxism), 1927, No. 3, pp. 91, 93 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

There were grounds to hope for success. During the early days of the uprising a unit of Garibaldists under the command of Francesco Nullo fought under Polish banners. On 5 May 1863, the unit was defeated near the village of Kzhizhovka, and many Garibaldists were taken prisoner. They were court-martialled and, in December 1863, were doing penal servitude east of the Baikal region. Emilio Andreoli, Alessandro Venanzio, and Luigi Caroli were soon sent to work in the Kadinsky mine, where they formed close friendships with the exiled revolutionaries Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Mikhail Mikhailov. In this way the paths and fates of Russian, Italian and Polish revolutionaries were intertwined.

Garibaldi felt sincere compassion for the sad situation in Poland and the heroic Polish people, but at that time he could do nothing to help.

Soon the Bakunins moved to Florence. Reminiscing about that time, the Russian artist Nikolai Ge wrote that Bakunin "gave the impression of being a large ship, without a mast or helm, sailing with the wind, knowing neither where nor why. Close by him was his wife, a young and extremely pretty Polish woman, an entire circle of Polish and Russian emigrants, and ordinary people, acquaintances".¹ Bakunin's marriage was not a happy one. He was totally involved in revolutionary matters, cared nothing for the comforts of life, and acted and lived only in accordance with the requirements of his "work". His wife did not share his convictions and had no desire to live his lifestyle.

In addition to his Russian acquaintances, Bakunin quickly came to know a circle of Florentine democrats. He became especially close to Giuseppe Dolfi, to whom he presented the letter of recommendation Garibaldi had written on his behalf. One of Bakunin's friends at that time, Alexei von Friken, a Russian art critic and researcher of Roman antiquities, wrote about Dolfi that in character and in body he was "reminiscent of other times in Florence and other people. This was a tall, broad-shouldered and husky man; when I looked

¹ N. N. Ge, *Severny vestnik* (Northern Herald), 1894, March, p. 236 (in Russian).

at him I involuntarily thought of those huge stones used to build palaces and towers in Florence in the Middle Ages. Once Dolfi was walking arm in arm with Mikhail Bakunin, who, as is known, was as tall and broad-shouldered as the Florentine baker. The two of them took up almost the entire width of one of Florence's narrow streets. 'Look,' Alberto Mario, who was walking with me behind the two men, said and pointed at them, 'it's a moving barricade that we will put to good use during the first uprising.'"¹

The owner of a bakery and pasta shop, grand master of the local Freemason Lodge, an extremist republican and democrat — this was Dolfi.

This was not the first time Bakunin had shown an interest in the Freemasons. According to his friend Adolf Reichel, a German musician, Bakunin joined the Freemasons on the eve of the 1848 Revolution while in Paris. At any rate Count Heliodor Skorzewski of Poland wrote Bakunin on 9 October 1848: "I'm happy to discover you are a brother. I will soon bring your diploma, and will write to Paris today to expedite matters." In the same letter he cordially invites Bakunin to visit the lodge in order to prepare for the "title of Master", for which Bakunin had all the right qualities.²

In the 1860s, like the 1840s, Bakunin used the Freemason's organisation for his own purposes. Since he did not have his own social base in Europe, he primarily relied on the intellectual community; thus, this organisation seemed to him suitable for revolutionary propaganda. Bakunin joined the Freemasons not because he accepted their teachings; on the contrary, it was he who wanted to teach them. He tried to write a Freemason catechism to prove that the existence of God is incompatible with man's reason and freedom, but his efforts to persuade the Freemasons to replace their cult of God with a cult of man were unsuccessful.

The year 1864 was an important one for Bakunin for another reason. While staying in London for a few

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *Bakunin*, 1970, p. 225 (in Russian).

² M. A. Bakunin, *Collected Works and Letters*, Vol. 3, pp. 538-39.

days in early November, he met Karl Marx and was accepted into the International Working Men's Association.

On 3 November Marx wrote Engels: "*Bakunin* sends his regards. He left today for Italy where he is living (Florence). I saw him yesterday for the first time in 16 years. I must say I liked him very much, more so than previously. ... From now on — after the collapse of the Polish affair — he (*Bakunin*) will only involve himself in the socialist movement. On the whole, he is one of the few people whom after 16 years I find to have moved forwards and not backwards."

¹

Bakunin accepted Marx's request that he distribute the documents of the International in Italy, but he showed no haste in doing so. Instead he worked on writing his own doctrine and setting up a corresponding organisation. This was the beginning of the anarchic phase of his activities. Once again he was ready to fight — this time against all the governments of Europe. He had no money and no real supporters, but this did not bother him. Leaping years and generations ahead, he saw a distant goal — the emancipation of humanity from all forms of exploitation, inequality and oppression.

A programme of the International Secret Society for the Emancipation of Humanity was the first document to contain Bakunin's new ideas. He wrote that the goal of the Society was to unite the revolutionary elements of all countries for the purpose of creating a genuine holy alliance of freedom to counter the Holy Alliance of the tyrannies in Europe: religious, political, bureaucratic and financial. Thus begins the document's first section, entitled "The Goal of the Society".

The first pages of the manuscript reflect Bakunin's social orientation: guided by a small group of intellectuals dedicated to the cause of emancipation, the bourgeois youth was to "prod" the masses, moving them forward.

The problem was to find a way to unite people who were solely interested in serving mankind. Bakunin

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1986, pp. 18-19.

did not think it possible to hold an open international congress of liberals and progressive people of all countries. "Even if only serious-minded people whom we know, and not imbeciles and spies, come to our congress," it would be impossible to come to an agreement considering all the different points of view. Moreover, publicity would destroy the secretiveness, which had to be maintained at all costs, "otherwise we would ourselves reveal to our enemies our more or less illegal projects, our plan of action, and the state of our strength, as well as our weakness". What was needed to organise a true alliance was secrecy, general unity and a "great common principle".

Bakunin discusses this principle in the next section of his programme. There existed, in his opinion, two principles in the world: the principle of authority and the principle of freedom. The first rested on the church and state and was based on disdain for man. To counter this principle, "we propose the great revolutionary principle of the freedom, dignity and rights of man."

Further Bakunin describes the deep humanist foundation upon which this principle was based. "We believe that if a man often reveals himself to be bad and stupid, he is nonetheless always capable of intelligence and kindness... We believe that without divine intervention man himself possesses an invincible incentive and an inner force, his own essence and nature that throughout the ages and the centuries necessarily propel him to truth and kindness... To be free is the right, the duty, all the dignity, all the happiness, and the entire mission of man. It is the accomplishment of his destiny. To be incapable of liberty is to be incapable of humanity."

Social order should not restrict the freedom of the individual; on the contrary, the order itself should ensue from his freedom. "Liberty does not restrict but confirms the liberty of all. You find this law of solidarity in all real human functions ... intelligence illuminates intelligence, but in accordance with the same law, it is extinguished under the pressure of stupidity. Thus the intelligence of each increases as increases the intelligence of all others, and the stupidity of one is to a cer-

tain extent the stupidity of all.”¹ The same law of solidarity is found in labour and is called the law of the association and division of labour.

“The complete liberty of everyone is impossible without the complete liberty of all. The implementation of liberty in equity is justice.”

Having thus provided a basis for his fundamental principle, Bakunin turned to the results ensuing therefrom.

He believed that in order to achieve justice, it was necessary first of all to revoke the right to inherit, to institute freedom of marriage, the equality of women and society's right to adopt children. And labour was to be the only producer of wealth.

Bakunin thought it possible to restructure the life of society with minimum force: “The abolition of the right to inherit and the powerful actions of the associations of workers backed by a new spirit and the democratic reorganisation of a country will be sufficient.”

In the political sphere, the society would be organised from the bottom up: “The community represents a political unity, a small world independent and based on the individual and collective liberty of all its members.”

A federal union of communities would comprise a district or province. A nation would be comprised of a federal union of provinces, and an international federation — of all who wished to join. To implement his wide-ranging plans, Bakunin tried to organise a secret society called the International Brotherhood. He wrote the “Revolutionary Catechism” for the leadership of the Brotherhood.

This marked the beginning of Bakunin's theoretical and practical activities to establish anti-authoritarian, utopian socialism. He was fifty years old and would live another twelve years. He would devote approximately 10 years out of the last 12 years of his life in trying to develop a system of ideas that would go down in history as Bakuninism.

¹ E. L. Rudnitskaya and V. A. Dyakov, “Bakunin's Manuscript ‘The International Secret Society for the Emancipation of Humanity’ (1864)”, in: *The Revolutionary Situation in Russia from 1859 to 1861*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 305-55 (in Russian).

In mid-1867, with the threat of a Franco-Prussian war hanging in the air, bourgeois-democratic circles in Western Europe came up with the idea of creating an International Pacifist Organisation, the first congress of which was held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Convening on 9 September 1867, the Congress was an important event. The legendary biographies and world fame of a number of the delegates drew large crowds. The streets were decorated with verdure and flags. The more famous were met and accompanied by the people to the Election Palace.

Garibaldi, riding in an open carriage and waving his hat in greeting, was met with enthusiastic shouts.

Six thousand people filled the huge Election Palace. After Congress Chairman Jules Barni made an introductory speech, representatives of various organisations and workers' unions mounted the rostrum one after the other to take the floor. Their programme demands were for the most part utopian and not always well-founded, but the audience did not seem to notice it.

Bakunin took part in the Congress as well. He had learned of the coming event back in June from a Manifesto put out by the League of Peace and Liberty. He was especially pleased that among those who supported the idea of convening a pacifist congress were many of the activists from 1848 and, in general, a number of widely known individuals among democratic and liberal circles in Europe: Louis Blanc, Alexandre Martin Albert, Victor Hugo, Pierre Leroux, Edgar Quinet, Elie and Elisée Reclus, Jules Favre, Johann Philip Becker, Giuseppe Dolfi, and Garibaldi. An international congress at which such people were gathered could, Bakunin believed, be an appropriate arena for spreading the idea of the International Brotherhood.

When Bakunin entered the hall, he was greeted with a standing ovation. The first day he was elected vice-president of the Congress and took his place in the podium on the stage.

Bakunin addressed the Congress on its second day, 10 September. His speech, and his very presence, were very well received. The Russian philosopher-positivist

Georgi Vyrubov, who was present at the Congress, described the circumstances: "When he heavily and awkwardly walked up the stairs leading to the bureau platform, carelessly dressed as always in some kind of loose-fitting jacket under which not a shirt but a flannel sweater was visible, there were shouts of 'Bakunin!' Garibaldi, who was in the chairman's seat, rose, took a few steps and then threw himself into his arms. This ceremonious meeting of two old and tested revolutionary fighters made an incredible impression. Despite there being a number of opponents in the hall, everyone rose and there was no end to the enthusiastic applause. The next day Bakunin made a magnificent speech, which, as always, was a tremendous success... He was a wonderful people's tribune with an incredible gift for public speaking. Remarkably, he could be equally convincing in several languages. His imposing figure, animated gestures, sincere and convincing tone, and short, as if chopped by an ax, sentences — all these things made a strong impression."¹

Bakunin the "people's tribune" called for the defeat of Russia with its absolute monarchy in any war the tsar engaged in, for the tsar's failures somewhat mitigated the burden of imperial despotism. Universal peace was impossible as long as the present centralised states existed. We "must desire their disintegration so that on the ruins of these entities, organised from the top to the bottom by despotism and violence, we may develop free entities, organised from the bottom up, by the free federation of individuals within communities, of communities within provinces, of provinces within nations, and, finally, of nations within a United States of Europe."²

Though his speech was successful, this does not indicate that the participants at the Congress agreed with Bakunin's proposals. In fact, there was no unified opinion at all among them. But when it was decided to draw up a programme for the pacifist organisation

¹ G. N. Vyrubov, "Revolutionary Reminiscences", *Vestnik Yevropy*, (European Bulletin), 1913, February, p. 54 (in Russian).

² Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, Vol. I, P.—V. Stock, Paris, 1907, pp. 16-17.

the League of Peace and Freedom, Bakunin was one of the people selected to work on it. He and the other revolutionary democrats were in the minority, the majority being made up of bourgeois liberals. This did not, however, alter Bakunin's resolve to impose the fundamental ideas of his "Revolutionary Catechism" on the League and to try to make the pacifist bourgeois organisation an open anarchic society.

Later, after realising his mistake, Bakunin wrote: "I am ashamed to have participated in that bourgeois League. For an entire year I was stupid enough to believe I could turn it towards socialist principles."

The League was just one of the activities Bakunin was involved in during this time. After moving to Switzerland, he joined a serious conspiracy to create a secret revolutionary organisation (Alliance), which was to operate within the International. Simultaneously, he was widely circulating his own ideas in the press and at workers' meetings.

Baron N. Wrangel, a liberal-minded Russian, travelling in Europe at the time, wished to hear the famous revolutionary speak. In his memoirs, he described how the "people's tribune" rose heavily to a stage draped in red calico and decorated with Swiss flags, paused a few seconds, and then began to speak.

"A powerful voice, exclamations, peals of thunder, the roar of a lion, the flash of lightning, howl of a storm — an elemental force astonishing, incomprehensible. This man ... was created for revolution. Revolution was his natural element, and I am certain that if he succeeded in restructuring some state as he saw fit, if he were able to introduce his own form of government, the very next day, if not sooner, he would rise up against his own creation, stand at the head of his own political opponents, and try to overthrow himself."¹

With all its paradoxes, this character portrait correctly underscores Bakunin's indomitable revolutionary passion, which, far from fading with the years, grew stronger. Moreover, after fifty, he turned his in-

¹ N. Wrangel, *Memoirs*, Berlin, 1924, pp. 61, 63 (in Russian).

creasingly acute intellect in a new direction. The stagnation in his intellectual life that occurred during his years in prison and exile was left far behind. Perhaps because he did not expend all his strength during the prime of his life, now, at what would appear to be his twilight, he began to discard his own old ideas and achieve new horizons.

Bakunin learned a lesson from the workers' movement in Western Europe. He was compelled to give up his utopian ideas about the people and gained a better understanding of the role of the proletariat in social revolution. Basically he focused on the proletariat in the Romance language countries, in which it was rather influential in the early 1870s.

The Franco-Prussian war broke out in late July 1870. Already during the first days of August the French army had suffered serious defeats, followed by workers' spontaneous mass demonstrations in Paris demanding the overthrow of the regime of Napoleon III, the proclamation of a republic and the arming of all citizens capable of carrying arms.

The wave of revolution swept over other large cities in France — Lyons, Marseilles and Toulouse. Bakunin viewed the revolutionary upsurge of the French workers as the dawn of social revolution which, he believed, would encompass not only France but also Italy, Spain, and the Romanic-speaking parts of Switzerland, and would lead to the abolition of the state order and the establishment of a free federation in this part of Europe.

There was no time to lose. Within three days Bakunin wrote 23 long letters calling for the immediate organisation of revolutionary activities and sent them to Italy, Spain, Switzerland and France.

Albert Richard, a French correspondent for the Geneva newspaper *L'Egalité* and Bakunin's comrade, related that during this time he received several letters from Bakunin urging him to prepare everything for the revolution and to be at the ready. Counting heavily on the Italians, who had described the situation in their country as very tense, Bakunin invited to Locarno Giuseppe Fanelli, one of the founders of the Alliance and a member of the Italian parliament.

While he was in effect the leader of the conspiracy, Bakunin thought it necessary to state his views openly concerning the severe revolutionary crisis. This was why he wrote "Letters to a Frenchman", which were published as a separate brochure in Neuchâtel by James Guillaume.

Examining the position of class forces in France, Bakunin wrote about the treacherous and counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, the revolutionary consistency of the workers and the complicated inconsistency of the ten million French peasants. It was the latter group that Bakunin correctly believed would determine the fate of the revolution.

Bakunin criticised all who had previously headed the revolutionary movements, reproaching them for always trying to accomplish the revolution themselves, "with their own power and their own forces".

"...I am the absolute enemy of a revolution by decrees... In seeking to impose liberty and equality, the authoritarian system of decrees destroys them. The anarchic system of actions inevitably provokes and creates them without interference from any official or authoritarian force..."

"What must the revolutionary authorities — and let us try to have as few of them as possible — do in order to expand and organise the revolution?" Bakunin asked. They must not do it themselves by issuing decrees or by imposing it upon the masses, they should incite it among the masses. They must not impose any kind of organisation, but, in creating their autonomous organisation from the bottom to the top, work surreptitiously exerting personal influence over the more intelligent and the more influential individuals in each locality."¹

Like most of Bakunin's ideas, this plan was not only utopian but also idealised both the public consciousness and also those few representatives of the "revolutionary authorities" which he allowed into his system out of necessity.

Bakunin had far from completed his "Letters"

¹*Œuvres complètes de Bakounine*, Vol. VII, Editions Champ Libre, Paris, 1979, pp. 50, 52.

when revolution did in fact break out in France.

After being defeated near Sedan on 2 September 1870, the French Army surrendered. One hundred thousand soldiers, officers and generals led by Emperor Napoleon III were taken prisoner. Withdrawing from Sedan, the German Army marched towards Paris. Insurgent workers broke into the Bourbon Palace and demanded the immediate proclamation of a republic. The Third Republic of France was won by the workers this time as well, but it was the bourgeois leaders and supporters of the Orleans dynasty that came to power.

Revolution swept the country. In those areas where bourgeois opposition was weaker than in Paris, revolutionary communes seized power.

Bakunin had insufficient backing in Paris itself, but he did have supporters in the provinces, in Marseilles, and especially in Lyons. Gaspard Blanc (to whom Bakunin addressed his "Letters to a Frenchman") and Albert Richard headed a group of Lyons internationalists, upon which Bakunin placed his greatest hopes. Also, according to Bakunin's comrade, Mikhail Sazhin, "The entire International in southern France, although insignificant in size, was under the influence of Bakunin, and therefore several leading internationalists from Marseilles, Saint-Étienne and other southern cities gathered in Lyons upon his arrival."¹

Bakunin decided to leave for Lyons the very day he heard of the events in Paris. On 4 September he sent a letter to Albert Richard in which he insisted that Lyons and Marseilles stage their own insurgencies. "If the workers of Lyons and Marseilles do not immediately rise up, France and European socialism are lost. Thus, hesitation would be a crime. I am at your disposal and I await your immediate response." Evidently, Bakunin did not wait long for an answer, for on 6 September he wrote Adolf Vogt: "My revolutionary socialist friends in Lyons have summoned me to Lyons. I have decided to take my

¹ M. P. Sazhin, "First Meeting with Bakunin", in: *Mikhail Bakunin. Unpublished Materials and Articles*, Moscow, 1926, p. 16 (in Russian).

old bones there and to play probably, my last role.”¹ In the same letter he asked Vogt to send him money for the journey: for what might be his last revolutionary action, Bakunin was once again without funds.

Bakunin also borrowed money for his trip to Lyons from K. A. Roman, a secret agent of the Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Chancellery (Russia's political investigation agency) posing as N. V. Postnikov, a former cavalry colonel who was at that time supposedly a publisher. Compelled to give Bakunin 250 francs, the meticulous Roman immediately sent the bill to his chief. In this way the Third Department unexpectedly played an indirect part in the revolutionary activities of its sworn enemy.

On 9 September Bakunin left Locarno with V. M. Ozerov and a young Pole named Valence Lankiewicz and on the 15th arrived in Lyons. The Committee for the Public Salvation of France, which had seized power in Lyons after the first news of the victory of the revolution in Paris, had been dissolved and replaced by a municipal council that was backed by the national guard and comprised for the most part of bourgeois Republicans. There were few people who supported continuing the revolution and expanding its activities. The first thing Bakunin wanted to do was to unite these forces. He moved into the home of tailor Louis Palix, a member of the Alliance and there set up his conspiracy headquarters, where the leaders of the movement held constant meetings. On 17 September a well-attended meeting was held where the decision was made to create a Central Committee for the Salvation of France.

On 19 September Bakunin wrote Nikolai Ogarev: “My head is spinning there is so much to do. There is no real revolution here yet but there will be; and everything is being prepared and done for a real revolution. I am going for all or nothing. I hope for quick triumph.”²

Meetings attended by hundreds of workers dissatis-

¹ *Oeuvres complètes de Bakounine*, Vol. VII, pp. 290-91.

² *Letters of Mikhail Bakunin to Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev*, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. 408 (in Russian).

fied with the existing situation were being held almost every day. On 25 September the meeting adopted an appeal containing Bakunin's programme. Posters with the text of the appeal were printed and put up in the streets of Lyons. Signed by several Frenchmen and one Russian, this document called for the abolition of the administrative and government state machinery, the creation of committees for the salvation of France in all federal communes, and the formation of a revolutionary convention of France in Lyons. The appeal ended with a call to arms.

The workers of Lyons were restless, but there had been no overt activities. On 27 September the Central Committee for the Salvation of France announced it would be in session twenty-four hours a day. That night Bakunin for the first time openly called for an armed uprising.

Waving a red banner, workers the next morning gathered in the square before the Town Hall and then decisively seized the building. The leaders of the movement — Eugène-Bertrand Saignes, François Parraton, Albert Richard and Mikhail Bakunin — entered the building after the crowd and then began to address the people from the balcony. By this time national guard battalions had begun to move into the centre of the city, and the crowd dispersed.

Bakunin described what happened in a letter to Emilio Bellerio: "Thus, the Committee suddenly found itself surrounded by enemies. I was there with my friends and kept telling them: 'Don't waste time in idle discussion, act, arrest all the reactionaries. Hit reaction in the head.' In the middle of these wonderful speeches, I found myself surrounded by the bourgeois national guards being led by one of the strongest reactionaries in all of Lyons — the mayor himself — Monsieur Hénon. I fought back, but I was dragged and locked into a hole after being considerably roughed up. An hour later, a battalion of insurrectionists, having set the national guards to flight, came to free me. With my liberators I left the Town Hall, where there was no longer a single member of the Committee."¹

¹ *Oeuvres complètes de Bakounine*, Vol. VII, p. 299.

The next day Bakunin was forced to leave the city of Lyons: he was being hunted by city authorities who were restoring the bourgeois "order". A letter he left for Louis Palix hints for the first time at his doubt that the people were ready to stage a social revolution: "My dear Palix, I do not wish to leave Lyons without bidding you a last farewell. Prudence prevents me from coming to clasp your hand one last time. There is nothing more for me to do here. I came to Lyons to fight or to die with you... I am leaving Lyons, my friend, with a heavy heart and sense of foreboding. I am beginning to think about what has been done to France... The bureaucratic and military intelligence of Prussia united with the whip of the tsar of St. Petersburg will assure tranquility and public order over the continent of Europe for at least fifty years. Farewell liberty, socialism, justice for the people and the triumph of humanity. All this could have been the result of the present disaster in France. All this could have happened if the people of France and if the people of Lyons had wanted it." ¹

But the note of pessimism sounded in this letter was soon replaced by hope. After spending some time in Marseilles and somewhat recovering from the shock he had received due to the fiasco in Lyons, Bakunin was once again inclined to believe lack of organisation was the cause. In a letter to Emilio Bellerio written on 8 October 1870 he writes only that the game has been postponed and of his hopes of taking revenge in Lyons and Marseilles right under the nose of the Prussians.

Bakunin later told Herzen that faith in the implementation of his social theory helped him to bear defeat.

* * *

Once he returned to Locarno, where he was living at the time, Bakunin turned to consider the theoretical aspects of the recent events. At first he

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 295.

thought to do this as a continuation of "Letters to a Frenchman", but gradually an entire book began to unfold. He wrote Ogarev: "I am writing a pathological study of present-day France and Europe for the edification of activists in the near future and also to justify my own system and course of action. Thus, I want to write something in detail and completely integral. It will not be a brochure but a book."¹ Bakunin's work appeared in 1871 under the title *The Knout-German Empire and the Social Revolution*. The book's contents went well beyond the author's original intentions. Here he expressed his love for France, suffering for her defeat and for the passivity of her people; he criticised the German Empire and discussed the problems confronting the social revolution. Here too he proposed new formulas, made many digressions and revealed profound philosophical thinking. It is important to note Bakunin's special attention to the worker question and the organisation of the future struggle. "The only class that today in effect openly carries the revolution in its breast is the class of urban workers," Bakunin wrote. But he understood that the workers could not be victorious without the participation of the peasants. How could this class be revolutionised? "We must send detachments into the countryside as propagandists of revolution. The general rule: whoever wishes to spread revolution must himself be a real revolutionary. ... Therefore, above all, the detachments of propagandists must themselves be revolutionary-inspired and organised. They must carry the revolution in their breast in order to be able to provoke and arouse it in others."²

Bakunin's philosophical digressions can be found in his manuscript *On the Divine Phantom, the Real World and Man*, first published in 1908 by the author's fellow-revolutionary James Guillaume under the title *Bakunin's Philosophical Dissertation*.

¹ *Letters of Mikhail Bakunin to Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev*, pp. 415-16.

² Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, Vol. II, P.—V. Stock, Paris, 1907, pp. 332-34.

The idea of political utopia as expressed in the doctrine of Bakuninism evolved along with Bakunin's later philosophical views. The inevitable, as he believed, anarchic-revolutionary restructuring of society was in need of a philosophical basis. Bakunin derived this law from the objective forms of the existence of matter. The endless interaction between the worlds of the universe and the worlds of the solar system; nature as the universal causality "creating worlds"; logic as the natural result of the development of all living things, objective laws of nature that unite and organise human society — these were the things Bakunin considered as proofs of the inevitability of the final triumph of stateless forms of life. All the causes existing in the known and unknown worlds, he believed, just like on our own earth, are material.

Viewing the world of nature as the result of the logic of the natural development of things, Bakunin arrived at this axiom: "All that is natural is logical, and all that is logical is already realised or will be realised in the natural world, including the social world."¹ In this way a thread is drawn from nature to society and laws common to all things existing.

Interpreting the category of liberty is a red thread running through all Bakunin's later works where he asserts that the natural force of things stipulates its existence.

"The freedom of the individual consists solely in that he obeys the laws of nature because he himself has recognised them for what they are and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by some outside will, whether divine or human, collective or individual."²

Thus political rebellion and the rational organisation of society, in accordance with the laws of nature, are manifestations of freedom. This interpretation approaches the concept of freedom as recognised necessity.

The link between freedom and collectivism is one of the more important aspects of this problem.

¹ Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, Vol. III, 1908, p. 230.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

According to Bakunin, man becomes man and realises his own existence only in society and only through the joint actions of society. Bakunin's thesis was that freedom existed in unification. He directly linked similar concepts of unification, organisation and the joint actions of society with the concept of collective freedom.

Bakunin believed the highest condition for freedom and humanity was the law of equality, applicable to entire nations, classes, societies and individuals. Examining this law in the early 1870s, just as in 1864, he described solidarity as an enormous social force. He posed the rhetorical question: "If this social power exists, why has it been insufficient until now to soften and humanise people?" And then proceeded: "The answer to this question is very simple: because up until now this force was itself not humanised, and it was not humanised until now because social life, which this force has always truly represented, is founded, as we know, on the cult of the divine and not on respect for humanity; on authority and not on liberty; on privilege and not on equality; on exploitation and not on fraternity among men... Make a social revolution. Make it so that all needs become really interlocked, so that the material and social interests of each conform with the humane obligations of each. And there is only one means for this: destroy the institutions of inequality; establish the economic and social equality of all, and on this base the liberty, morality and united humanity of all will arise."¹

Bakunin saw the key to the moral norms of social life in collectivism and natural solidarity. He viewed the individual as a part of society, rightly assuming that for each individual life outside society represented complete alienation tantamount to moral and physical death. "No man, regardless of how strong he believes himself to be, will ever have the strength to cope with the unanimous scorn of society; no one will be able to live without feeling support in the agreement and the esteem of at least some

¹ Michel Bakounine, *Oeuvres*, Vol. III, pp. 71-72.

part of this society.”¹ Bakunin considered public opinion to be the sum of dominant social influences expressed by the general consciousness of a significant part of the people.

Another of Bakunin's important theoretical books was *Etatism and Anarchy* (1873), where the author sharply criticised all authoritarian systems and affirmed the important principle of statelessness for the organisation of society — “from the bottom up”.

For Russian readers Bakunin wrote *Addition 'A'*, a book that discussed the tasks of the revolutionary struggle in an agrarian country where peasants lived in communes, and summoned the progressive youth to work among the people.

Bakunin called on students to leave science for a time, for it was unable to determine the future forms of the people's lives: only the people themselves were able to develop these forms. He also urged the youth to instigate a general public uprising among the peasants.

One of the major causes of defeat for all popular uprisings was discord among the communes. Once he confirmed this, Bakunin concluded that one of the most important duties of the revolutionary youth was to establish by all possible means a rebellious link between the separate communes. To do this it was necessary to go to the people, “for outside the people, outside the multi-million working masses, there is no more life, activity or future.”

What was needed was to break open the communes, “to conduct a living flow of revolutionary thought, will and action between these separate worlds. What was needed was to link together the best peasants in all the villages, provinces, and, as far as possible, regions, the progressive people, and revolutionaries by birth from the Russian peasantry, and where possible, to conduct the same living connection between factory workers and peasants”.

What was needed was for the revolutionary youth itself to cease being an onlooker and to become an

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

“active and progressive participant doomed to destruction”.

The generation of the 1870s accepted Russian utopian socialism, which declared revolution to be the only way to free the peasants, and had since the mid-19th century become the ideology of the liberation movement. This was fertile soil for Bakunin's ideas about the readiness of the people for revolution and about specific actions among the people. Bakuninism became one of the most important trends in Russian populist thought of the 1870s.

The situation in the West, however, was different. The success of Bakunin's ideas in the countries of Western Europe with an average level of industrial development (Italy, Spain, Southern France, Switzerland) led to a split in the international workers' movement, and the activities of the Alliance disorganised the work of the International. As a result, in 1872 the Hague Congress of the International Working Men's Association removed Bakunin from its rolls.

From 1872 to 1874 Bakunin and his supporters continued their revolutionary actions in Switzerland, Spain, and Italy. In Bologna, Bakunin attempted to take part in one last revolutionary action. In setting out for the city, he was not so much counting on success as on the opportunity to die at the barricades. On 5 August, Andrea Costa, the principal leader of the uprising, was arrested before the insurgency even took place. The next day other members of the revolutionary conspiracy gathered at Bakunin's lodgings and worked out a plan of action. Leaflets appeared in the streets calling the people to arms. But preparations for the revolutionary uprising had been weak, and as a result the Italian Committee for Social Revolution turned out to be isolated even at the time of the uprising. Instead of the thousands expected, only a few dozen people gathered for the uprising, and they were quickly dispersed by troops or left of their own accord.

It was an uneasy night for Bakunin as he waited to hear word from his comrades. This is what he wrote in his diary: “We failed. The night of the 7th [August] has been terrible. I have a revolver; death is at

hand. One after the other came L., Silvio, Berardi, Nia ... I was alone from 3 till 4. I would die at 4. At 3:40 Silvio arrived ... and wouldn't let me die." This was the sad ending of the last endeavour of the sixty-year-old revolutionary.

The next couple of years Bakunin lived in Lugano. His bitter experiences caused him to change some of his views. For example, he no longer believed in the immediate readiness of the oppressed masses to revolt at the first call of a revolutionary organisation. "...The hour of revolution has passed," he wrote in February 1875, "not as the result of the terrible, unfortunate incidents that we witnessed, nor as the result of the horrible defeats, whose guilty victims we more or less were, but because I, to my great sorrow, state and each day will state again, that revolutionary thought, hope and passion are totally absent in the masses. And when they are absent, no matter how one tries, one cannot succeed."¹ This insight came late.

Bakunin's last years were lived in the same conditions as his earlier life as a revolutionary. Those who knew him previously always remarked on his impoverished surroundings and minimal personal needs.

A. V. Bauler (Weber), a member of the Russian liberation movement, was living in Italy at that time and knew Bakunin well. She wrote: "He was always dressed in the same worn-out clothes and ate hardly anything. He didn't even have a comfortable place to sleep: there was scarcely room on his narrow iron bed for his large body. The bed was too small for him, it swayed and creaked; and the large old scarf that served as a blanket barely covered him. His only luxuries were tobacco and tea. He smoked the whole day non-stop, and all night except for a brief interval when his pain allowed him to sleep." His death was the result of severe kidney disease and rapidly developing dropsy. He died in Bern on 29 June 1876 in the hospital of his old friend Professor K. Fokht.

On 15 July 1876 the Russian review *Vperyod!*

¹ Max Nettlau, *Michael Bakunin, Eine biographische Skizze*, Verlag von Paul Pawlowitsch, Berlin, 1901, p. 51.

(Forward!) published in London wrote that news about Bakunin's death had caught everyone off guard: "If all countries and places where Bakunin left a mark and which felt his influence were to be informed, the whole world would have to be told. Dresden, Prague, Paris, Lyons, London, Stockholm, Italy and Spain should be present at the funeral of one who went down in their history, not to mention our own homeland, where so many friends and enemies, so many adorers and reproachers were awakened to public life or called to action by the words and deeds, truths and paradoxes of this universal agitator."

On 1 May 1903 the Russian social-democratic newspaper *Iskra* announced a fund-raising for a memorial to the famous Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin: "We have only to add that despite the deep differences separating our views from those of Mikhail Bakunin, we are able to appreciate in him a man who fiercely and selflessly fought for his convictions his entire life. Unfortunately, there are still too few people like this in Russia, and their memories should be cherished even by their adversaries."

AROUND AND ABOUT SERGEI NECHAYEV

In July 1871 a group of revolutionaries were put on trial in St. Petersburg.

The accounts of the Chamber of Justice sessions which heard the "case of the conspiracy to overthrow the existing order of government in Russia" were printed in many newspapers and primarily in the *Government Messenger*. This kind of openness was unheard of at this time, but on this occasion the incriminating evidence, as was the opinion in the ruling circles, could help to expose the revolutionaries to society at large.

"Timely and detailed printing of the accounts of these sessions in the *Government Messenger* will have, I am convinced, a most beneficial effect on the public in attendance,"¹ was the way in which O. V. Essen, a senator and the head of the Ministry of Justice explained the situation in his report to Alexander II. "God willing!" was the Tsar's answer.

This time the government found itself in possession of truly unprecedented evidence. These were the programme documents of the secret organisation the People's Judgement and the correspondence of its members. Created in the fall of 1869, this was an organisation which based its programme and tactics on the Jesuit principle: the end justifies the means.

¹ B. S. Itenberg, *The Revolutionary Narodniks' Movement*, Moscow, 1965, p. 134 (in Russian).

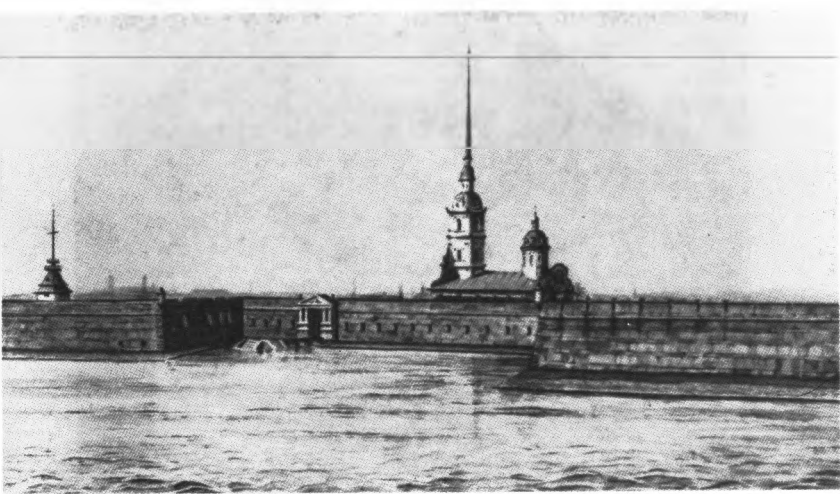
The overthrow of the existing order was the goal, conspiracy was the form. Deceiving the nation as well as their comrades-in-arms, terrorising those who disagreed with them, practising a system of mutual espionage and blackmail were some of the principles of this revolutionary activity.

The methods which had been instilled into the movement by its leader Sergei Gennadiyevich Nechayev were responsible for the murder of one of the movement's members. Nechayev, together with four compatriots killed Ivan Ivanovich Ivanov, a student at the Petrovskaya Agricultural Academy and a member of the People's Judgement who had questioned the correctness of Nechayev's actions. Nechayev began his campaign against Ivanov by first circulating rumours that the latter was a secret agent of the Third Section.

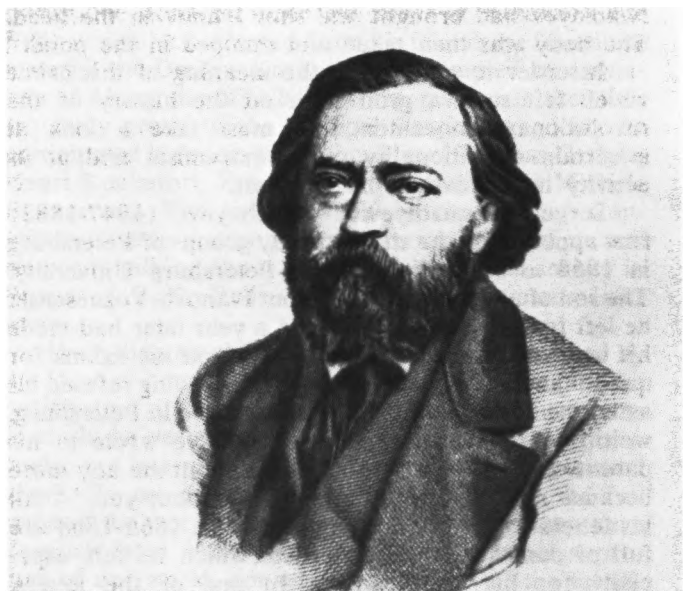
The murder, so uncharacteristic of the Russian liberation movement at that time, took place on 21 November 1869. In his report to the court, the Minister of Justice revealed that Ivanov's corpse, weighted down with stones at the neck and feet, was found on 25 November in a pond in the Petrovsky Park, on the territory of the Academy. The investigation concluded, and was consequently justified, that the murder had been committed by individuals who had some grounds for it, either someone who desired to get revenge on Ivanov for some reason, or someone who felt his death would serve the common cause. In other words, the murder was most likely the work of the members of a secret organisation. Guided by this, the investigation revealed that the suspects in Ivanov's murder were: Sergei Nechayev, Petr Uspensky, Alexei Kuznetsov, a retired collegiate secretary by the name of Ivan Pryzhov, and a Moscow petty-bourgeois Nikolai Nikolayev. As it turned out, according to the testimony of these individuals, Ivanov was killed on Nechayev's orders for his insubordination to the Committee (of the People's Judgement). The victim was first lured into a grotto in the Academy park under pretext of digging up a printing-press hidden there. The murderers first attempted to strangle him, but Nechayev then grabbed a revolver which



Sergei Nechayev. Photograph.
Early 1870s



Natalya Herzen
The Peter and Paul Fortress



Мой милый Тимур
в 2 апреля

Nikolai Ogarev. Photograph.
1870s

Nikolayev had brought and shot Ivanov in the head. The body was then taken and dumped in the pond.¹

In order to understand the meaning of this crime which left such a grim stain on the history of the revolutionary movement, we must take a look at a certain conditionality of its extremism and at its activity in Russia and in the West.

Sergei Gennadiyevich Nechayev (1847-1882) first appeared in the student study groups of Petersburg in 1868 as an auditor at the Petersburg University. The son of a petty bourgeois from Ivanovo-Voznesensk, he left for Moscow in 1865 and a year later had made his way to the capital where he passed his exams for qualification as a "people's teacher". Having refused his assignment to a school in Gdov, he stayed in Petersburg, waiting for a vacancy to open up. He wrote to his parents at that time: "Don't worry about me any more because now it's my turn to worry about you."² All his letters to his relatives for the years 1866-1868 are full of concern, even tenderness which he felt, especially for his grandparents. In one of the letters, in an attempt to convince them of his affection, and talking about how valuable their love was, Nechayev wrote: "May God grant that this love last as long as He lets you live."³

He finally got a job in the capital in 1867, first in the Andreyevsky, and then in the Sergeyevsky popular schools, and made his way into the student milieu. "I have a lot to do here," he wrote to his parents. "I'm busy the whole of these long Petersburg days ... every hour is valuable."⁴

What he was busy with, besides work, was his initial efforts to organise activity among the students and his own self-education which was quite peculiar. Having become an auditor at the University in 1868 he attended almost no lectures and kept his reading

¹ *Nechayev and His Followers. A Collection of Articles*, Moscow, 1931, p. 11 (in Russian).

² RO-IRLI (Pushkinsky Dom), (The Manuscript Department, The Institute of Russian Literature), fund 197, S. G. Nechayev, Letter from Nechayev dated 3 September 1866 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, Letter from Nechayev dated 11 April 1866.

⁴ *Ibid.*

rather one-sided. In those old issues of *Kolokol* (The Bell) which he borrowed from his friends he found the material on Dmitry Karakozov's attempted assassination of Alexander II to be most interesting. In the student study group of the Medical-Surgical Academy he participated in reading of Louis Blanc, Thomas Carlyle, Henri Rochefort, Rousseau, Robespierre and Michele Buonarrotti. The latter's book on the Babeuf Conspiracy "made a strong impression on some of us and we began talking about organising a political society in Russia",¹ Z. K. Ralli, one of the participants later wrote.

More than anything else Nechayev was attracted by the ideas of conspiracy, revolutionary dictatorship, the justification of terror and his own concept of equality. In truth, he perceived of these concepts extremely vaguely, not having constructed any system of personal views. He never became an "intellectual" in the full sense of the word. The well-known revolutionary Vera Zasulich later wrote that "Nechayev was not a product of our world, nor was he a product of the intelligentsia; he was an outsider among us."²

Zasulich continues this line of thought elsewhere by saying that "it wasn't views which he picked up through contact with this milieu which were the secret of his revolutionary energies, but a burning hatred, a hatred not only for the government...but for the society at large, for all its educated segments, and all the "barin's sons", rich and poor alike, conservative, liberal or radical. Even in terms of the young people whom he recruited, if he didn't hate them outright, then he at least felt no sympathy towards them, no pity, nothing but scorn."³

Feeling himself alienated from the milieu in which he found himself and scorning those around him, all the while encountering opposition to his views, Nechayev, right from the very start, chose a path of lies, mystification and blackmail.

¹ *Ibid*, Z. Ralli, "Sergei Gennadyevich Nechayev", *Byloye* (The Past), 1906, No. 7, p. 137.

² V. Zasulich, "The Nechayev Affair", in the collection: *The Liberation of Labour*, 1924, No. 2, p. 69 (in Russian).

³ V. Zasulich, *Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1931, p. 57 (in Russian).

When Nechayev made his appearance in Petersburg study groups, the student movement was one of the more important elements in the liberation movement.

Questions about how to fight the government, about one's attitude toward the people, society, one's comrades-in-arms, were constantly in need of answers. There were no set answers. Various draft programmes were born and quickly died at the numerous meetings. Under these circumstances, having made his way into the student circles Nechayev found himself, at least at the beginning, nothing more than a listener, a bystander, witness to the discussions and readings. But he quickly mastered the basic ideas and demands which were the focus of this agitation and he began to come forward, heatedly and convincingly, speaking of the need for open protest against the government's university policies and the need to give the movement a general political character. Some of the young people supported Nechayev while others came out against such decisive actions. But, among both groups he enjoyed a degree of popularity and in this way it was not possible that he would go unnoticed.

Nechayev was possessed of an iron will, a sense of fanaticism and unswerving belief in his own rightness and that is his chosen path. Besides his unique understanding of the concept of revolution as the call to destroy "this vile order", Nechayev had no other thoughts, feelings, desires or aims.

We may cite here an investigative description, given by V. A. Alexandrovskaya who knew Nechayev well and had offered her services to the Third Section in their attempts to arrest him. "He is daring and witty, but not always cautious; he is bold to the point of being audacious. A completely one-sided despot. Crafty and suspicious, but not profound and one-sidedly gullible. Willful, but with a kind of unsteady grasp of things. Active to the point of exhaustion. He shows no human peaceful aims, or weaknesses, except for a blind self-confidence. Not only in his understanding of people, but of everything that surrounds him, he is decidedly one-sided. For example, he is convinced that in most people, if they were put into a desperate position,

a sense of courage, as strong as the situation demanded, would come into play, despite what their background or political affiliations were... He is, it seems, completely consumed by the affairs of his society; he has no other interests at all... He denies himself any luxuries."¹

Others who knew him well had this to say about Nechayev's personal characteristics. Ivan Pryzhov: "I have spent 40 years on this earth, have met all sorts of men of letters, scholars, people who were well-known for their activity, but I never encountered and can't even imagine the kind of energy that I saw in Nechayev."²

"Nechaev," wrote his friend V. Orlov, "is an individual capable of impressing anyone possessing of a weak character." Nikolai Nikolayev whose character was similar, explained that he "subordinated himself completely to Nechayev, who demanded unquestioning obedience in everything".³

Everyone who knew Nechayev agreed that here was individual for whom his own unique concepts of the interest of the revolution were of prime importance. People who were unable to renounce their private affairs and feelings in the name of the revolution felt a definite awkwardness when dealing with him.

"I was ashamed to admit," recalled A. I. Uspenskaya, "that I had a personal life, or private interests. He had nothing of the kind: no family, no personal attachments, no corner of his own, no personal property, not even anything like the little we had. He even had no name of his own: at that time they called him not Sergei Gennadiyevich, but Ivan Petrovich".⁴

Nechayev's ideas on the possibility of expanding the student movement into a protest against socio-economic and political oppression and to move the *raznochintsy* intelligentsia into the people in order to rouse them to revolution, found their expres-

¹ *Nechayev and His Followers*, p. 140.

² *Our Country. A Collection of Historical Material*, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 190 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "Memoirs of a Woman of the 1860s" in *Byloye* (The Past), 1929, No. 18, p. 33.

sion in the *Programme of Revolutionary Actions* which was put together in the winter of 1868-1869 by a group of individuals including Nechayev and Petr Tkachev.

Petr Tkachev, one of the ideologues of Russian revolutionary Narodism (Populism) was already a well-known publicist by the end of the 1860s. His political views consisted of instilling the Jacobin doctrine of social revolution into the Russian movement. He was impressed by the figure of Nechayev; he saw in him the image of that revolutionary which he had created in his articles. He tried to convey the principle of "the end justifies the means" as one that would be mandatory for the "people of the future".¹

The programme which Tkachev put together with Nechayev proclaimed a social revolution as the final goal and a political one as the only means of achieving it. "We must attempt to create as many revolutionary types as possible," wrote the authors of this document, "to develop social consciousness and the possibilities of revolution as the only way of achieving a better order of things and to care for the building of a revolutionary organisation. In order to achieve this we must distribute leaflets written in a certain way, organise meetings and frequent protests...; recruit people and create individual circles which will meet often and everywhere...; create monetary funds for the revolution; attempt to form contacts with European revolutionary organisations and maintain constant ties with them."²

Nechayev's ideas were not as yet clearly formulated in the *Programme*, but they were in the process of forming in his head. And they were taking shape under the influence of the unique cult of Machiavelli which was quite popular among the youth of that time.

Fighting for the Italian's right to scorn the nature of the means leading either directly or indirectly

¹ "Peoples of the Future and Bourgeois Heroes", the title of one of the P. N. Tkachev's articles. See: P. N. Tkachev, *Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1976 (in Russian).

² *Our Country. A Collection of Historical Material*, pp. 187-88.

to the end, Tkachev wrote: "His understanding of truth and justice is reduced to a simple calculation of usefulness and expediency. In denying the natural right of the scholastics, he denies their mystical morality; without beating around the bush he makes might into right and therefore all his energies are directed towards making Italy, first and foremost, a strong and united kingdom. Thus Machiavelli understood the essence of impulse and therefore we may rightly call him a true realist... Machiavelli's realism ... enlarges the range of our moral convictions; it frees us, once and for all, from the heavy burden of scholasticism, it gives us a healthy, sober view of those phenomena of which, during his day no one, and today only a very few, have a clear understanding. Meanwhile, until this realistic point of view makes it way into the consciousness of the majority ... until the representatives of popular interests cease to voluntarily entangle themselves in scholastic ideas about good and justice, until they understand that right and justice are not only on the side where there is real opportunity (i. e. the sum total of all means — intellectual, moral and material) for the realisation of this right, until then, all of their noble striving will bring no tangible benefits."¹

In this period of rationalism, Machiavelli's ideas were perceived by the progressive students as the formulation of the specific task of the political struggle. Often times their practical attempts at mastering these ideas were extremely straightforward. The following is a personal commentary offered by a member of the student movement, Georgi Petrovich Enisherlov, who was also on trial as a member of Nechayev's gang.

Once, at one of the meetings, he introduced himself as an emissary of a non-existent organisation and announced: "We must fight force with violence, lies with lies and intrigue and craft with Loyola's system... Each must immediately do what he can; it is a crime to sit on your hands." "Three

¹ P. N. Tkachev, *Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1975, pp. 101-102.

or four of our meetings," he writes further, "were crowned with success, and exceeded my most ardent expectations. With just two individual objections, everyone accepted my theory."

A little later one of the young men in attendance asked Enisherlov:

'Do you know what you've started here? ... Shall I tell you what you want?'

'Go ahead.'

'You've decided ... to go down forever in the annals of history... Make no mistake about it!'

"I tried to disabuse him of that notion."

'I want to know,' interjected another, 'what are our chances of success?'

'Why—worried about saving your skin?'

'Yes... Have you thought about what will happen to the people if this experiment fails?'

'Things can't get any worse!' I snapped back. 'I am not empowered to reveal the organisation's strengths to you.'

"Later, Nechayev memorised that last sentence and it came in as handy for him as it had for me."¹

On another occasion, in a discussion of his views with a member of the student movement, a certain E. Kh. Tomilova, Enisherlov told her about the "theory of party honesty" which says that there is "no absolute honesty, only party honesty."

'Tell me the truth,' she said animatedly, 'who told you this?'

'Nobody.'

'You read it in Bakunin, right?'

'Cross my heart. I haven't read Bakunin. I've only read Herzen, Ogarev and Chernyshevsky.'

'There's nothing like that in any of them! Don't tell me you thought it up on your own!'

'Yes,' Enisherlov answered.

At one of their meetings disputes arose around Enisherlov's suggestion of "conspiracies", "military coups d'état", "any kind of attempt on an individual"

¹ N. M. Pirumova, "M. Bakunin or S. Nechayev?" in *Prometei* (Prometheus), Moscow, 1968, No. 5, p. 178.

and "Jesuit ways". "Only one young, lean, clean-shaven youth," wrote Enisherlov, "with an angry expression on his face, his lips compressed nervously, pressed my hand warmly and said: 'I'm with you—forever. You'll never get anything done by direct means; our hands will be tied... It is specifically this Jesuit outlook that has yet to reach us. Thank you for thinking of it and talking about it. I'm your man.'

"This was Sergei Gennadiyevich Nechayev who at this time was still an unknown 'people's teacher'." ¹

Having thus introduced his hero, Enisherlov evidently exaggerates his role. But this, too, is of some significance since it reveals something about how various segments of society related to Nechayev's ideas. In this respect, Enisherlov's next story is of particular interest. In it he proves that he, along with a group of compatriots, was the creator of *The Revolutionary Catechism*, a work which is the quintessential expression of Nechayevism.

According to Enisherlov, the basis for this document is 15 questions which every member of the society must answer. Those points which received a majority were considered approved. In this way the following points were adopted unanimously: on social revolution as the goal of the "Association"; on the indiscriminate choice of methods; on the death penalty as the single means of punishing "traitors and informers". In answer to the question of a possibility of a member in a complicated contradictory situation being guided by his own conscience, the majority gave a resounding "No", and only three expressed a dissenting opinion.

Let's take a look at Point 14 in its entirety. "What are the responsibilities of an individual who leaves the organisation?— Absolute silence as to the organisation's activities. Those opposed: 1 (Nechayev demanded death)."

In recalling these questions in his *Confession*, Enisherlov concluded: "This was the very programme in its initial form which consequently became known

¹ *Ibid.*

as *The Nechayev Catechism*. In describing further developments of events after the trial, Enisherlov writes of one more conversation with Tomilova. In answer to her questions of why Enisherlov hated Nechayev so much and what he accused him of, "I answered truthfully: because she had been arrested, and that my *Catechism* had been published but not because of the question of authorship."

"'I understand,' she answered, 'it's not a question of plagiarism, but of the defamation of the very idea which half of Russia has turned its back on in horror.'" ¹

What was this *Catechism*? The report of the search conducted in Petr Uspensky's apartment lists a book "one-sixteenth the normal size...written in a foreign language, something like Italian". Uspensky explained that the book was written in code. A search of another member turned up the key to the code which made it possible to read the text. In 1871 the *Government Messenger* (Issue 162) published the full text of the *Catechism*. In 1924, during an investigation of the secret archives of the Third Section, another coded copy was discovered which was more accurately decoded by the historian A. I. Shilov. Let's take a look at the contents of this collection of rules which had been put together as a means of directing the participants of The People's Judgement.

In the first section which talks about the revolutionary's duties toward himself, the *Catechism* demanded a complete denial of all forms of personal and social life, a disdain of public opinion, and a hatred of social mores. "For him everything is moral that favours the triumph of the revolution, and everything is immoral and criminal that impedes it." ²

In the section on the revolutionary's duties toward his comrades-in-arms:

¹ N. M. Pirumova, "M. Bakunin or S. Nechayev?", pp. 179-180.

² *The Hague Congress of the First International. September 2-7, 1872. Minutes and Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 599.

"The degree of friendship, devotion, and other obligations towards...a comrade are only measured by the degree of his usefulness in the practical work of the pan-destructive revolution." ¹ One may rescue a comrade who has gotten into trouble only in that instance where the measure of utility which he brings outweighs the measure of effort expended to rescue him. Not all comrades are equal. Every dedicated "should have at hand several revolutionaries from the second and third rank, that is, from those who have not been fully initiated. He must consider them as part of the general revolutionary capital placed at his disposal." ²

In terms of the revolutionary's attitude toward society: he must live in society, having as his only aim its merciless destruction. Keeping this final goal in mind, he must pretend, in order to make his way into all segments of society, "the upper and middle classes alike, into the merchant's shop...into the aristocratic palace, into the bureaucratic, military and literary world, into the Third Section, and even into the imperial palace".

The whole of this foul society must be divided into several categories.

"The first consists of those who are condemned to death without delay. The comrades should draw up lists of these condemned men in the order of their relative harmfulness to the success of the revolutionary cause, so that the first numbers may be disposed of before the others...

"The second category should consist of people who are allowed to live provisionally so that by a series of monstrous acts they will drive the people to the inevitable revolt.

"The third category covers a large number of highly placed brutes or individuals who are remarkable neither for their minds nor for their energy, but who, by virtue of their position, have wealth, connections, influence, and power. We must exploit them

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 600.

² *Ibid.*, p. 601.

in every way possible, outwit them, confuse them, and, wherever possible, by *possessing ourselves of their filthy secrets*, make them our slaves...

"The fourth category is composed of various ambitious men in the State service, and liberals of different shades. We can conspire with these on their own programme, putting up an appearance of following them blindly. We must get them in our hands, *seize their secrets, compromise them completely*, so that retreat becomes impossible for them, and make use of them to cause trouble within the State.

"The fifth category consists of doctrinaires, conspirators, revolutionaries, all those who babble at meetings and on paper. They must be constantly encouraged and inveigled into practical and dangerous demonstrations which will have the effect of eliminating, without a trace, the majority, while making true revolutionaries out of some.

"The sixth category is very important — the women, who must be divided into three classes: first, useless women without spirit or heart, who must be exploited in the same way as the third and fourth categories of men; second, fervent, devoted and capable women, who are nevertheless not with us because they have not yet arrived at a practical ... revolutionary awareness; they must be used like the fifth category of men; finally, women who are entirely with us, that is to say, who have been fully initiated and who have accepted our programme in its entirety. We must treat them as the most valuable of our treasures, for without their help we can do nothing."¹

The last section of the *Catechism* is devoted to the duties towards the people. It calls for the revolutionary to unite with those elements of popular life which have always protested against the state and society. "We must join the adventurist world of the brigands, who are the true and unique revolutionaries in Russia."²

The *Catechism* was obviously directed not only against the government, but against society as well. And it was specifically on this that the reactionary

¹ N. M. Pirumova, "M. Bakunin or S. Nechayov?", pp. 601-602.

² *Ibid.*, p. 603.

publicist Mikhail Katkov decided to base his arguments. In a leading article in the *Government Messenger* he attempted to prove that society cannot remain neutral in the struggle of the existing order against revolutionary ideas which are imposed on the younger generation.

"Look," he wrote, "at how the Russian revolutionary perceives himself. At the height of his consciousness he declared himself to be a man of no convictions, without rules and without honour. He must always be prepared to perform any abomination, forgery, deceit, robbery, murder or treason. He is allowed to be a traitor even to his own accomplices and comrades... Don't you feel as if the rug is being pulled out from under your feet? Don't you find yourself in an awful abyss between madness and swindling?"¹

Nevertheless, neither Katkov's article nor the publication of the trial documents could compromise the Russian revolutionary youth in the eyes of society. Quite the opposite: this unprecedented openness led to the fact that most people learned of the real principles of the revolutionary movement, about the purity of their intentions, their enthusiasm and the selflessness of those who were being recruited or who had already been recruited by Nechayev.

Many eventually denied not only Nechayev's methods of leading the struggle, but the *Catechism* as well (the accused had had no prior knowledge of it). In the words of one of the participants of the revolutionary Populist movement, Nikolai Charushin, "the youth gained a valuable and practical lesson from this trial: under no circumstances whatsoever should an organisation be constructed ... along the model of Nechayev's, and one should avoid using such recruiting methods as Nechayev himself used."²

Another revolutionary Osip Aptekman, had this to say about the "young people's attitude toward Nechayev... It was decidedly negative... I looked at 'The Nechayev Affair' as at a harmful revolutionary

¹ *Government Messenger*, 1871, No. 162, p. 1 (in Russian).

² N. A. Charushin, *About the Distant Past*, Moscow, 1926, pp. 78-79 (in Russian).

attempt of that time, as at an illicit revolutionary experiment and considered it to be a nightmarish episode in the history of our revolutionary movement." ¹

* * *

Not just the revolutionaries were intrigued by Nechayev's lessons. This phenomenon left an indelible mark on Fyodor Dostoyevsky who saw in it a terrible danger, a symptom of society's disease.

"I meant to put this question and to answer it as clearly as possible in the form of a novel: how, in our contemporaneous, transitional and peculiar society, are the Nechaievs, not Nechaiev himself, made possible? And how does it happen that these *Nechaievs* eventually manage to enlist followers—the Nechai-evtzi?" ²

Dostoyevsky's novel *The Possessed* (Besy) was tortuously difficult to write. "Never has a work cost me such an enormous effort," Dostoyevsky complained to the philosopher and publicist Nikolai Strakhov, who shared many of the author's opinions, in the autumn of 1870. "In the beginning, that is, at the end of last year, I perceived this work as something forced, something concocted. I looked down on it. Then I was visited by a true inspiration and I came to love this work, I grabbed a hold of it with both hands and began to cross out all that I had written... Now I've already sent off the beginning to the *Russian Messenger* and suddenly I am scared: I'm afraid that I've bitten off more than I can chew. I'm seriously frightened." ³

The trial of the followers of Nechayev served as an impetus for the novel. Having sent the beginning of the manuscript off to the editors, Dostoyevsky

¹ O. V. Aptekman, *The Land and Freedom Organisation in the 1870s*, Petrograd, 1924, p. 60 (in Russian).

² F. M. Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, Vol. 1, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1949, pp. 142-43.

³ F. M. Dostoyevsky, *Collected Works*, in thirty volumes, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1986, Book 1, p. 148 (in Russian).

wrote to M. N. Katkov: "If you decide to publish my work next year, I think it is important that I tell you now, at least in a nutshell, what my novel is all about.

"One of the most important events in my story will be Nechayev's murder of Ivanov which is already well-known in Moscow. Let me quickly qualify this by saying that I knew neither Nechayev nor Ivanov nor the circumstances of the murder and that I still know nothing except for what I read in the papers. And even if I did know, I wouldn't use any of the material. I'm interested only in the accomplished fact. My imagination can be entirely different from the former reality and my Petr Verkhovensky may in no way resemble Nechayev, but it seems to me that my affected mind has already imagined that figure, that type which corresponds to that evil deed."

Dostoyevsky was struck not so much by the figure of Nechayev from the court proceedings, as by the essence of the phenomenon itself. He attempted to explain this phenomenon in the title of the novel: *The Possessed* (*Besy*) and in the epigraph which is taken from Alexander Pushkin's poem of the same name:

*Strike me dead, the track has vanished,
Well, what now? We've lost the way,
Demons have bewitched our horses,
Led us in the wilds astray.*

In 1873 after the novel had been published in its entirety in the *Russian Messenger* and had caused a lively polemic in the press, the journal *The Russian World* came forward with the assertion that an "idiotic fanatic" like Nechayev could find followers only among the idle, underdeveloped and completely uneducated youth.

Dostoyevsky's reaction to this article was sharp, and in its essence, unexpected. It had the ring of an "old Nechayevist". "Yes," he wrote, "among the Nechaievs there may be very gloomy creatures—disconsolate and distorted ones—with a thirst for intrigue of a most complex origin and for power, with a pas-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

sionate and pathologically premature urge to reveal their personalities, but ... even real monsters among them may be highly developed, most crafty and even educated people... I also stood on the scaffold, condemned to death; and I assure you that I stood there in the company of educated people," he angrily wrote in his article "One of the Contemporaneous Falsehoods" which was published in *The Citizen*.

"I know," Dostoyevsky went on, "that you, no doubt, will say in rebuttal that I am not one of the Nechaievtsi at all, and that I am only a 'Petrashevets'... But all right — a Petrashevets. How do you know that the Petrashevetsi could not have become the Nechaievtsi, *i. e.*, to have chosen the 'Nechaiev' path, *would things have turned that way?* ...But permit me to speak about myself only: probably I could never have become a *Nechaiev*, but a *Nechaievets* — for this I wouldn't vouch, but maybe I could have become one ... in the days of my youth."¹

After such a seemingly incredible admission, which he needed to better convince himself of his current (as differing from his youthful) point of view, Dostoyevsky continues: "And so, why do you think that even a murder *à la* Nechaiev would have stopped of course not all, but at least, some of us — in those fervid times, in the midst of doctrines fascinating one's soul and the terrible European events which, forgetting altogether our fatherland, we have been watching with feverish tension? Unquestionably, the monstrous and disgusting Moscow murder of Ivanov was represented ... to ... the 'Nechaievtsi' ... as a political affair, useful to the future 'universal and *great* cause'. Otherwise, it is impossible to understand how several youths (whoever they may have been) could agree to commit such a saturnine crime."²

So, the Nechaievists are neither "idiots" nor are they "monsters", but educated and convinced individuals. So how was it that they became "possessed", in Dostoyevsky's words, and why had they become so dangerous to society?

¹ F. M. Dostoevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, Vol. 1, pp. 146, 147.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

"The horror," exclaimed Dostoyevsky, "lies precisely in the fact that in our midst the filthiest and most villainous act may be committed by one who is not a villain at all! This, however, happens not only in our midst but throughout the world; it has been so from time immemorial, during transitional epochs, at times of violent commotion in people's lives — doubts, negations, scepticism and vacillation regarding the fundamental social convictions. But in our midst this is more possible than anywhere else, and precisely in our day; this is the most pathological and saddest trait of our present time — the possibility of considering oneself not as a villain, and sometimes almost not being one, while perpetrating a patent and incontestable villainy — therein is our present-day calamity!"¹

In large measure time is the culprit in nearly the whole of the situation. A transitional time, full of doubt, denial and scepticism.

Is Dostoyevsky right? For the most part — yes.

After the first democratic attack on the monarchy was fought off, society was gripped by apathy and inertia. Let's take a look, for comparison's sake, at the testimony of another contemporary who was writing at the end of the 1860s and into the beginning of the 1870s from another position, another camp. "The joy of living" — perhaps the joy of having survived — became their goddess [of the progressists, already on the decline], as soon as the nameless crowd which ten years before made the force of the reform movement refused to hear any more of 'all that sentimentalism'."

"Iron is stronger than straw,' or 'One cannot break a stone wall with his forehead,' and similar proverbs, unfortunately too numerous in the Russian language, constituted now their code of practical philosophy."² These sentiments, expressed by the well-known revolutionary Petr Kropotkin, referred to the older generation, but amongst the youth things

¹ *Ibid.*

² P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. 2, Smith, Elder, & Co., London, 1899, p. 32.

were hardly any better. Here is what one of the members of the Chaikovsky circle wrote in this respect: "The old traditions of the revolutionary movement have almost all died; and there are almost no old revolutionaries left either. Masses of people had no purely empiric soil under their feet, and many loose ends were left dangling."¹

That time of "dangling loose ends" when there were no firm moral or human values, when doubt and denial from time to time replaced a firm belief in one or another ideal was unarguably a difficult time for the youth who had still not acquired a strength of spirit.

But it was specifically at this time that the pure and courageous personalities of Petr Kropotkin, Andrei Zhelyabov, Sofia Perovskaya, Alexander Mikhailov and many, many others were forming. The time became, essentially, the prelude to a new surge in the fight for liberation in Russia.

But Dostoyevsky looked at this, as it were, from one side, and saw, felt with that brilliant sensitivity of the artist, the most dangerous tendency in social life.

"Our young men belonging to the educated classes, brought up in the fold of their families where, as a rule, one encounters dissatisfaction, impatience, coarse ignorance, ... and in which, almost everywhere, for genuine education is substituted impudent negation of other people's opinions; where material motives prevail over the loftiest idea; where children are brought up without foundation, without natural truth, with disrespect for, and indifference to, their native land and with a scoffing contempt for the people, which has been spreading so fast, particularly in recent times — is it from here, from this wellspring, that our young men will draw the truth and faultlessness of their convictions during the initial stage of their lives?

"Herein is the root of evil: in tradition; in the succession of ideas; in the century-old national self-sup-

¹ *Revolutionary Populism in the 1870s*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1964, p. 205 (in Russian).

pression of any independence of thought; in the conception of the rank of a European subject to the express condition of disrespect for one's self as a Russian!"¹

A lack of independent thought and of self-respect means a willing and easy subordination to foreign powers and authority; a lack of respect for the people means the possibility of experimentation on them in the name of the "common future and great cause" — such are the traits of those individuals whom Dostoyevsky called, in the plural, "Nechayevs".

Verkhovensky, the main character in *The Possessed*, in outlining the characteristics of the society of the future claimed: "Down with culture. We've had enough science! Without science we have material enough to go on for a thousand years, but one must have discipline. The one thing wanting in the world is discipline. The thirst for culture is an aristocratic thirst. The moment you have family ties or love you get the desire for property. We will destroy that desire; we'll make use of drunkenness, slander, spying; we'll make use of incredible corruption; we'll stifle every genius in its infancy. We'll reduce all to a common denominator! Complete equality! ...Only the necessary is necessary, that's the motto of the whole world henceforward."²

Verkhovensky's plans, and Nechayev's *Fundamental Principles of the Social Order of the Future* are extremely similar.

Immediately after the "overthrow of the existing foundation" Nechayev suggested concentrating "all the means of social existence in the hands of our Committee" and to declare physical labour mandatory for all.

"For a certain number of days assigned for the revolutionary upheaval and the disorders that are bound to follow, each person must join one or another of these *artels* according to his own choice... All those who remain isolated and unattached to workers'

¹ F. M. Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, Vol. 1, p. 150.

² Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Possessed*, William Heinemann, London, 1913, pp. 391-92.

groups without sufficient reason will have no right of access either to the communal eating places or to the communal dormitories ... in a word, he who without sufficient reason has not joined an artel, will be left without means of subsistence. All the roads, all the means of communication will be closed to him; he will have no other alternative but work or death."¹

Such were the ideals of "barracks communism", this triumph of "equality in slavery" under the iron dictatorship of the "committee" whose enemy was Dostoyevsky. Even before Nechayev, whose case was, in essence, only a stimulus for the writer, Dostoyevsky had formulated his idea of the rejection of despotism which has as its goal thrusting one or another system of equality, "good", upon the people.

Full of arrogance and a scorn for society, the hero of *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov wanted to "take power" over society in order to do it good.

The Grand Inquisitor (in *The Karamazov Brothers*) also burdens mankind with his system of "happiness". Not respecting God because of the latter's romanticism, and man, for his "weakness and baseness", the Grand Inquisitor offers his own formula for universal prosperity: "Miracles, secrets and authority".

In his rejection of similar phenomena, in his fight against their terrifying danger, Dostoyevsky, as writer and as humanist, was unconditionally right.

* * *

Let us pause for a while in Nechayev's activities beyond the borders of Russia. In the spring of 1869, having devised and spread the story of his arrest and imprisonment in the fortress, Nechayev left to go abroad.

He appeared in Geneva in the beginning of April 1869. Prior to his arrival he has sent, in Herzen's

¹ *The Hague Congress of the First International, September 2-7, 1872, Minutes and Documents*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 597.

name, a proclamation entitled: "To the Students of the University, Academy and Technological Institute". Herzen refused to meet with Nechayev and did not approve of the proclamation. But Nechayev made a significant impression on both Bakunin and Ogarev. For Bakunin, Nechayev was the only person whose energy level matched his own. The idea of complete denial of everything personal in the name of the revolution was an idea also close to Bakunin's heart. In Nechayev's words Bakunin heard the "pain of our people's misfortune", "the bright flame of love for the people". Ogarev was won over by Nechayev as champion of the new order and as one of the lower rank. Both old revolutionaries, in their attempts to form ties with the Russian movement, believed Nechayev's false information about the existence, in Russia, of a secret organisation and headed by the "Committee". They readily agreed to cooperate with him. Thus began the joint activities of this strange triumvirate, and in this respect Herzen had the following to say: "You, fathers-triumvirate, have no will-power whatsoever, just as no terrorist can possibly have. Bakunin is drawn by the masses, by the youth of age and the stupidity of wisdom. Nechayev is like absinthe — it gives you a headache, just as that extremely quiet and platonically terrorist vein does that you (Ogarev) maintain."¹

Nechayev's goal was to acquire a material support from Herzen and to organise, with Ogarev's and Bakunin's help, a propaganda campaign and to smooth out the conspiratorial ways to Russia. And in just a few spring and summer months in 1869 he had managed to do just that.

In spite of his sharp antipathy towards Nechayev, Herzen was forced to give Ogarev half of the so-called Pavel Bakhmetev Fund which had been bequeathed to the editors of *The Bell* by the landowner Bakhmetev, for use in revolutionary propaganda. This money was used for organising and publishing a series of proclamations which had the most extreme messages, and were written by the "three fathers". Included in these

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX, p. 144.

publications was *The Revolutionary Catechism* written, as we have suggested, by Nechayev.

In July 1869, Nechayev left to return to Russia. Along the way he managed to make contacts with the Bulgarian emigrants in Rumania and made an attempt to create the beginnings of a secret society in Odessa.

He arrived in Moscow in September. There, in just three and a half months he managed to unite the youth who were champing at the bit to become actively engaged. These were mostly members of a few circles, "groups of 5" which made up the centralised People's Judgement, guided by the imaginary "Committee" which, in truth, was Nechayev alone.

After the organisation fell apart, after Ivanov's murder and the arrest of hundreds of people, Nechayev managed to go into hiding. He escaped to Petersburg and from there made his way to Switzerland.

In the beginning of January he again appeared in Geneva where he began to insistently demand of Herzen and Ogarev the other half of the Bakhmetev Fund, in order to continue his campaign of agitation. This campaign now also included the renewed publication of *The Bell*. Nechayev received his money only after Herzen's death.

Bakunin, for his part, did not participate in the new series of proclamations and in the six issues of the new Nechayev's *Bell*. The authors were Ogarev and Nechayev.

Soon after Nechayev's second appearance in Geneva, something happened in his life which was not supposed to happen to a man who had denounced all things personal.

In February 1870, just two months after her father's death, Natalya Alexandrovna, Herzen's oldest daughter ("Tata" as she was known by her close friends) came to visit Ogarev in Geneva. She was intelligent, attractive, shared her late father's affection and devotion, but differed from him in her passivity, her cautiousness, secrecy and occasional suspicion.

Natalya Alexandrovna's spiritual state at the time of her visit to Ogarev was anxious and unbalanced. She was still suffering the effects of the recent trauma,

a mental illness, the burden and pain of the loss of her beloved father. In addition, she was suffering from a striving to find her path in life, to become useful to the Russian cause. In December 1869, she wrote to Ogarev: "I see, I understand that life is so short, I should take advantage of every minute, I should do things for others, at least for those closest to me, but something is keeping me from this... It's hard for me, everything is scattered, mixed up — I want to put things in order. I'm looking for a solution."¹ This striving became all the more acute in that time when she met Nechayev. His wilful and purposeful nature which seemed to Natalya Alexandrovna at first like the last word in the Russian movement, could not fail to make a strong impression on her. Against the wishes of her relatives who feared for her health, she gave in to Nechayev's and Ogarev's request to move from Paris to Geneva in order to help them. While she refused to lend her name to this publication of a new *Bell*, she agreed to serve as a secretary in the editorial office.

But Nechayev, in his attempts to obtain Natalya's participation in his propaganda campaign, was guided not only by his business instincts. This stern fanatic was only 23 at the time and capable of deep human emotions. It wasn't for nothing that the great prophet Dostoyevsky, in his sketches for *The Possessed* wrote that Nechayev "acted, in part, from the heart".² This is visible from both Natalya's and Nechayev's letters, as well as in the former's diary entries. These latter, by the way, were written two months after the events described in them. The tone was calm, the chronology was shifted forward by a month. "Volkov [Nechayev — *N.P.*] had a surprise for me, totally unexpected, at the end of March. He took it into his head to tell me, or at least let me know that he wasn't indifferent towards me. He beat around the bush for so long and spoke so convolutedly about trust and about friendship in general that I didn't understand a thing.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

² F. M. Dostoyevsky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 279.

But finally, towards the end, it was impossible not to understand... I didn't answer for a long time, hoping that either I had misunderstood him, or that he hadn't said what he wanted. And I really, seriously wanted it to be so, because I should see that what would follow would be the most boring, unpleasant, awkward and silly relationship."¹

The entry for 13 March sounds slightly different: "Until you give me your promise that you will not kiss me, I won't come to Ogarev's house..."

"I gave you my word yesterday, therefore, there is no reason for you not to come,"² Nechayev answered.

Let's take a look at other fragments of their correspondence. 20 March 1870. N. A. Herzen to Nechayev: "You ask ... about personal relationships — I gave you a negative answer now, and have repeated it on a number of occasions. You claim that I don't know myself. You are a strange person; I should know whether or not I love you; and I'll tell you again: No, I do not love you."³

27 March. Nechayev to N. A. Herzen: "If you can come tomorrow, come early, if possible (8 or 9 o'clock). It's imperative. Come quietly, right to the corner room. (Signed) Yours, head over heels.

"Ah, if only you could think more straightforwardly, and consistently! Give your mind free rein, don't constrict it with the usual prejudices! Soon you will stop rocking on the waves of the troubled sea and you'll come to the Promised Land if you are be consistent.

"Do you know how difficult it is for me because of you? And I love you..."⁴

28 March 1870. N. A. Herzen to Nechayev: "I won't come until I get what I wrote about this morning. I'm saying this in all seriousness.

"And if you don't want to grant my request, then send me everything here, along with an explanation, and I'll write and re-write..."

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, Moscow, 1986, p. 458 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 472.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 473.

⁴ *Ibid.*

29 March 1870. Nechayev to N. A. Herzen: "I am talking to you simply and straightforwardly, and I don't want to talk so seriously. Stop being so capricious, demanding that you be treated like a valuable human being and not like a prim young lady.

"These caprices are beneath you. They are not intelligent.

"You're a smart girl, after all!

"Instead of wasting your brain power on thoughts of what is proper and what is improper, you'd do better to think about the real essence of life and not about its outward appearances. Or do you want to spend the whole century in a pretty parlour room? Well, as you wish."¹

31 March 1870. N. A. Herzen to Nechayev: "In order to love, you have to know why — that is completely fair. Haven't I told you that your devotion to me is utterly without foundation? Why did you fall in love with me before I had a chance to do anything about it? [for the cause — *N. P.*] It's best not to talk about it until the storm and wind have passed completely..."²

"Storm and Wind" was the persecution campaign being conducted against Nechayev by the Swiss authorities. Convicted during the trial of his followers as a criminal, Nechayev was subject to extradition in any country in which he might hide. The agents of the tsarist police were following him throughout Western Europe. His arrival in Geneva was quickly discovered and he was again forced to go into hiding.

20 April 1870. N. A. Herzen to Nechayev: "If I could be assured that *no one*, in fact, besides me, could carry out your instructions, that it is *imperative* that they be carried out, then I would come to you. But I'm tired of your long conversations and especially of your strange behaviour and I don't want this to go on. I want no part of any intrigues and therefore I can't understand, what instructions I could possibly carry out...

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

² *Ibid.*

"I have absolutely no reason to come to see you. Do you know that they're offering 5,000 francs as a reward for finding you? What filth!... It would be best if you went away for awhile."¹

27 May 1870. Nechayev to N. A. Herzen: "I've had no letters from you. I waited yesterday, today — you can imagine my impatience. It's terribly boring here. This place that I'm staying in is called one of the most beautiful places in the country; and it's true. Here are all possible so-called beauties of nature. For a poet or an artist, this place would be heaven. But for me, it's a torture. No matter how many times I might force myself to admire the sunset or the sunrise, I still get nothing from it. Everything seems stupid and senseless to me. All around me are mountains, forests, streams, valleys, ravines and other charms of nature which I am unable to enjoy. All they do is bring melancholy, so much boredom for the soul!

"I can't get you out of my mind. What are you thinking about now? What's going on in your head? How will you answer me? I recall all our conversations and the more I think about them, the less I am satisfied with myself. Yes, I was too severe, too sharp with you. I frightened you, you, who had never encountered anything like me before. In many ways I amazed you, troubled you. You are a flower too tender and young, you have only begun to bloom. I should have been more careful with you, but I behaved with an unguarded sincerity, with an uncontrolled straightforwardness. You were so used to a kind of parlour artificiality, to a refined tension of relationships, that you were initially repulsed by me because I went beyond the bounds of accepted decency (which you, yourself, in theory, consider rather stupid).

"But now it seems you've got used to me, you're less ashamed of unrestrained speech and aren't offended by displays of deep and intelligent devotion. You understand the essence of that question which has such a profound importance for both you and me. You are standing on the brink of a resolution to your life's

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 475.

problem. And I believe now, more than ever before, that you won't stay in hibernation, or in a state of childish dependence, but you will enter into a free and reasoning life. I believe in the truth of my convictions and in the fact that they will prevail. And my confidence in you is so deep that I have never doubted, even during those moments when it seemed that you (either because you didn't understand or hadn't thought things through, or perhaps you were under the influence of others), hated me, when you were prepared to break with me.

"I'll say it again, I would be too weak, too lacking in character if I doubted the possibility that you would find a way out of your dependency, your aimless vegetation.

"I don't think that I have to expound on my desires, my aims to see you as a real woman. The reason for my passionate persistence is clear to you. I love you.

"Please write more, write everything that is in your heart. As soon as I get your letter, I'll write again."¹

30 May 1870. Nechayev to N. A. Herzen: "I sent you three letters and a telegramme yesterday, and there hasn't been a word from you or from anyone in Geneva. What's going on? I'm losing my mind assuming all sorts of things...

"Here, in the backwoods, without letters, in complete ignorance, I am dying of boredom. I won't be able to stand it for long! I am already anxious to make a quick trip to Geneva. And I'm dying for a letter from you!...

"Try to come here for a visit. ...I would be so happy to see you. Here in the mountains I have a whole hotel at my disposal. Please come. I'm asking you as a friend...

"For the cause, for the sake of all that you consider holy, don't take this ardent desire of mine to see you again as having some sort of ulterior motive. I have had so few shining moments in my life, my past is so

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 489-90.

bereft of joys. Don't poison this purest and most sublime of human emotions with instant suspicion. Please come to see me as an old friend, as a good friend and with complete trust. Much will depend on this conversation with you. If you understand that I am in some ways important to the cause, then it should be even clearer, how much you mean to me. One word from you can make me ten times stronger or weaker than I am. An explanation is too important, imperative. Please don't make me come to Geneva when you could come to me here..."¹

31 May 1870. N. A. Herzen to Nechayev: "I have no intention of either coming to see you or working together with you for the cause. There is no need to see you. Go to England, America, and live there until you're forgotten.

"I sincerely hope that you will come to the realisation, as quickly as possible, that to deal with people as you do is impossible, without awakening in them a sense of distrust which can easily turn into dissatisfaction or hatred, or all of these together..."²

Tata's answer was conditioned by the revelations of the circumstances surrounding the murder of Ivanov and Nechayev's mystifications and by the appearance in Geneva of the revolutionary Hermann Lopatin whose story follows in the next chapter.

There could be no talk at all about either friendly relations or about joint efforts. "The Russian cause", as Nechayev described it, was non-existent. There was no Committee, no escape from the Peter and Paul Fortress, no murder of a spy. What there was was blackmail, provocation and the murder of a comrade who had refused to be a toy in Nechayev's hands.

The Jesuit theory brought in to serve the revolution was what finally repelled Natalya Alexandrovna from the revolutionary cause. This unsuccessful experiment in political activism condemned her to a life far from the struggle for liberation in Russia.

But the meetings with her left a very different

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 491.

² *Ibid.*

mark on Nechayev. Natalya Alexandrovna was the only woman who had awakened such strong emotions in him. Her image and the imaginary development of their relationship formed the basis for Nechayev's novel *Georgette*, written while he was imprisoned in the Alexeyevsky Ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress. One of the bureaucrats of the Third Section, the former anonymous reviewer of not only this work, but of all the literary output of the secret prisoner, wrote: "The concept that people who love each other need not waste their energies on satisfying their emotions while they are needed for resolving social problems, is extremely ardently and long-windedly developed in this novel."¹

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the widespread opinion in literature that Nechayev was not particularly intelligent, educated or capable of writing is actually not true or just.² We would like to suggest that he possessed all of these capabilities. Nechayev wrote articles for European newspapers, wrote and published not only proclamations and pamphlets for the People's Judgement, but journals (*The Bell*, *The Commune*) as well. While in prison he wrote articles, novels, memoirs, read many books in three languages. His anonymous reviewer was obviously close to the truth when he wrote that "it is a mistake to call the author a commonplace individual. There is evidence everywhere of extreme inadequacies in primary education, but one can see a persistence and strength of will in that mass of information which he was consequently acquired."³

What turn did events take after the break between Natalya Alexandrovna and Nechayev? Lopatin's revelations led to a rift between the two old revolutionaries and the young fanatic and supporter of the Jesuit ideas. Bakunin, to be sure, still hoped, for a time,

¹ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, Moscow, 1929, p. 241 (in Russian).

² This opinion is shared, in part, by M. Confino, a Nechayev specialist who paints him as an individual of particularly primitive culture and a rather ordinary intellect. See *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 1966, Vol. VII, No. 4, p. 585.

³ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, p. 241.

that Nechayev might be lured from "that path which will prove fatal not only for him, but for the cause as well",¹ but Nechayev's consequent actions quickly disabused him of that idea. It was from Lopatin that Bakunin learned how Nechayev had compromised him in the eyes of Russian and international democracy. In attempting to completely switch the old revolutionary over to the "Russian cause", Nechayev demanded that Bakunin refuse to translate Marx's *Das Kapital* into Russian. The request for the translation and the advance of 300 roubles had already been received from Nikolai Lyubavin. Having informed Bakunin that he would take care of things with the publisher, Nechayev sent a threatening letter to Lyubavin from the Committee of the People's Judgement. "If he [Lyubavin — N. P.] and other such parasites consider a translation of Marx necessary for Russia at this time, then let them spend their own meagre energies on it." It went on to say that Lyubavin was instructed immediately to relieve Bakunin of all responsibilities for the translation, "on orders from the revolutionary committee".² Should this ultimatum go unheeded, Lyubavin was threatened with punishment by the People's Judgement.

The text of this letter, of whose existence Bakunin was long ignorant (thanks to the efforts of his enemies who accused the revolutionary of being its author), was finally revealed to the public and in 1872 played a significant role in Bakunin's expulsion from the International.

True to his Jesuit methods Nechayev considered it imperative to have compromising material on everyone who surrounded him, so that he could keep them all in line. This is what Bakunin had to say about this in a letter to his Polish compatriot W. Mroczkowski: "Yes, he stole our letters. Yes, he compromised us, acting in our names without our knowledge or consent. And yes, he always lied to us in the most unconscionable way. I accused him of all that ... and in answer to all

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 430.

² See: N. M. Pirumova, *Bakunin*, Moscow, 1970, p. 312 (in Russian).

my evidence, which was impossible to refute, do you know what he said? He said, we're thankful for everything that you have done for us, but since you never wanted to join us completely, saying that you had international responsibilities, we decided to secure ourselves against you, just in case. And to do so I considered it my responsibility to sew seeds of dissent between you, because it was not to our advantage that besides us, there would be such a strong connection." ¹

Finding himself all alone and not having the means to continue his activity, Nechayev, despite the threat of arrest, which constantly hung over him, continued to live in Switzerland. With the aim of "creating revolutionary capital", he, according to Bakunin, began to organise a "gang of thieves and brigands." ²

In a way known only to him, Bakunin managed to "destroy" Nechayev's plan and to get him to leave Switzerland. All the same, when leaving, Nechayev took with him a suit-case full of stolen documents which could have proved extremely dangerous in his hands. Right after him, following a trail he accidentally uncovered, was Bakunin's friend, V. M. Ozerov. This detective-like story of the hunt for Nechayev's suit-case was described by G. Guillaume, Bakunin's friend and publisher, in his own memoirs. Guillaume was completely ignorant of the revelations made by Hermann Lopatin. "In the beginning of July ... I got word from Nechayev that he was intending to send me his suit-case and asked me to hold it for him for a few days. The suit-case arrived and I put it in a safe place." A little while later Nechayev himself turned up in Neuchâtel, at Guillaume's house accompanied by a young Italian who seemed to be some sort of personal servant. Nechayev didn't take the suit-case, but said that one of his friends would soon come for it. The next day a certain V. Serebrennikov actually came and took the suit-case. But to Guillaume's surprise, one more day later Ozerov showed up on his

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, pp. 432-33.

² *Ibid.*

doorstep with the same Italian who had come with Nechayev. They asked about the suit-case and Ozerov told Guillaume about its contents and all of the preceding events. They were able to learn of Nechayev's whereabouts from the Italian who had escaped from him, saying that the *padrone* was bad, 'had treated him like a dog, that he had threatened him with a pistol to make him obedient'. From Neuchâtel, on Guillaume's instructions, Ozerov took off after Nechayev, heading to Le Locle, but 'the trip ended in failure.'¹

One more curious detail comes to light from Guillaume's story: "They weren't the only ones who were involved in this game. That day that they left for Le Locle," he continued, "or perhaps it was the next day, I was visited by a young lady with a rather secretive manner who handed me a letter from Bakunin. This young woman was Mlle. Natalie Herzen... She also was interested in finding Nechayev and wanted to use reason and logic to obtain that which Ozerov hoped to get through force. She was also unsuccessful; she introduced herself, in my name, to Auguste Spichiger, who let her into his home where Nechayev was in hiding, but her conversation with him was fruitless."²

Thanks to these memoirs, Tata's last meeting with Nechayev came to light. She herself never recalled it; in fact, the account of their relationship was later presented in a completely different light. According to evidence offered by M. P. Sazhin, a revolutionary and at one time a close friend of Bakunin, and, to some degree, of Nechayev, in 1872, after Nechayev had been turned over to the Russian police, he (Sazhin) received the following note: "My archives are with Mme. Clemant in town — I once wrote you from her house. Go and get them. I am sure that you will make good use of them. I am lost."³ Realising that the "town" in question was Paris, Sazhin set out, and

¹ James Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, Tome 2, Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition, Paris, 1907, p. 63.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 417.

having arrived, began his search for Nechayev's former lodgings. In his "archives", Sazhin found documents which belonged to Herzen, Bakunin, Turgenev and others. "I immediately burned all those papers right there on the spot. The only exception were those letters to Herzen's daughter... We could now sleep easier; there was no longer any danger that these papers would fall into the hands of the police."¹

The letters were returned to Natalya Alexandrovna. The decision to do so was the correct one since her pathological distrust would not have allowed her to believe any declaration that the letters had been burned along with the other documents. She would have peace of mind only when the letters were again in her hands. It is a puzzle, then, as to why she herself did not destroy this evidence of her brief participation in the Nechayev affair and instead, kept them the whole of her life.²

From Switzerland Nechayev made his way to London where he attempted to organise the publication of a new journal called *The Commune*. But the lack of funds and manpower prevented him from realising his intentions. Together with his last remaining friend S. Serebrennikov he published the first, and last issue of *The Commune* in September, 1870. In this issue he included, among other things, "A Letter to Ogarev and Bakunin". "Not foreseeing the possibility, in the near future, of meeting with you, I am asking you, through the mediation of Herzen's oldest daughter, who is in charge of our money, to send the editorial office here the remainder of that fund, one part of which I received while Herzen was still alive, and another, not long ago."³ Further on, he announced that, in spite of their differences of opinion, he still

¹ *Ibid.*

² N. A. Herzen died at the age of 92 in 1936. After her death these papers were kept in strict secrecy by another of Herzen's daughters O. A. Monod-Herzen, and only in the 1960s were they transferred to the Bibliothèque Nationale by his last daughter, Germaine Rist. The first publication was undertaken by T. A. Bakunina (Osorgina), G. Catto and M. Confino in Paris, and then in the Netherlands by A. Lening.

³ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 434.

saw in them the "best representatives of their generation, one which, unfortunately, was disappearing without a trace from the stage of history."¹

The publication of this letter was hardly intended to help renew the severed union; and it was more than likely that it was meant to create an impression about *The Commune* as an organic continuation of the general "Russian cause" which had been financed by Herzen.

Of course, no answer was forthcoming from the two old revolutionaries. Bakunin simply had other things on his mind since the uprising in Lyons was already in the beginning stages. In a letter from there, informing Ogarev of the coming of a "real revolution", he requested, rather matter of factly, to "send me the journal of those London scoundrels. I'll read it and give you my opinion as to how you should act."² Obviously, if the journal was sent, it never reached Bakunin.

After his failure in England, Nechayev then made his way to France. There, during the Paris Commune (18 March to 28 May 1871) he lived in the capital, in the apartment of the wife, and later the widow of one of the Communards, Madame Clemant. There is no information of his participation in the events. He was obviously just a spectator. Completely engulfed in the organisation of the "Russian cause", Nechaev looked at Western life from a distance; he observed and rejected it as a necessary lesson for Russia in the fight, and an attempt to create a new government.

After the Commune had been quashed, he went into hiding in Zurich and there he busied himself with working out the details of the party's political programme, a party which he was intending to form. The aim of such a party was to be the organisation of the revolution, the formation of a "social-democratic republic" in Russia and a union of all social-democratic Slavic governments.

In his "Fundamental Principles" he writes: "Political developments in the history of the Western nations

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 434.

² *Ibid.*

offer us many sad examples of revolutionary movements that have remained without positive results; and all the torrents of the people's blood spilled thus far by and large have not led to the desired goals because the insurgent people did not have in their midst competent and experienced men whose interests coincided with theirs..."¹

In issuing the call for a struggle against "the enormous and disciplined organisation of despotism", Nechayev always demanded the strictest centralisation both during and after the revolution, "until those results, obtained by the revolution could be fully guaranteed and guarded against attempts by internal reactionary forces and the intervention of external enemies alike."²

In further describing the characteristics of the future republic Nechaev once again revealed his leanings toward a strict regimentation. The land, factories and mills were to belong to a state which would distribute them between the rural communes and the labour associations. But the organisation of jobs, their regulation and the solution of the problem of productivity of labour was to remain the prerogative of the state. In general, Nechayev's final programme document was considerably more moderate than his publications in the annals of the People's Judgement. The well-known moderation of the tone of this last document can be explained by the fact that it was intended for prospective members, and more specifically, for the Polish democratic association, which Nechayev wanted to use in his own efforts. But this time his calculations resulted in a disaster. Adolph Stempkowski, a member of the Polish association and in Nechayev's confidence at that time turned out to be an agent of the Third Section.

For three years this extraordinary conspirator had successfully hidden from the agents of all European police forces who were searching for him as a criminal.

¹ *Slavic Review. American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3, September, 1973, pp. 552.

² Publication of the Society of the People's Judgement, winter, 1870, No. 2, p. 12 (in Russian).

But in August of 1872 he broke the basic rules of conspiracy not once, but twice: a few nights in a row he slept in one and the same apartment (Stempkowski's). During the day of 14 August he went, with Stempkowski and another friend, to a cafe where he was arrested. After the Zürich city council voted in October of that year to extradite him, Nechayev was turned over to the Russian police.

On 2 November, 1872 Bakunin wrote to Ogarev: "So, my old friend, the unheard of has finally happened. The republic has turned in the unfortunate Nechayev... A sort of inner voice is telling me that Nechayev, who has perished irrevocably and who undoubtedly knows this, will summon now, from the depths of his being which is confused, soiled, but hardly base, all his primal energies and valour. He will die a hero and betray no-one and nothing. Such is my belief. We shall soon see if I am right. I don't know about you, but I feel terribly sorry for him... Towards the end he became a complete idiot. Imagine this, that two or three weeks before his arrest, we, through our acquaintances (not directly, since neither myself, nor any of my friends wanted to see him) warned him that he should get out of Zürich fast, that they were looking for him. He didn't want to believe us and said: 'It's the Bakuninists that are chasing me out of Zürich,' and then added: 'This isn't 1870. Now I have my own friends in the Bern city council, they would have warned me if I was in danger.' And so he was arrested." ¹

In connection with Bakunin's thoughts on the reasons for Nechayev's indiscretion which eventually lead to his arrest, we may introduce another example from Dostoevsky's penetration into the psychology of his hero in *The Possessed*. In the rough drafts from the spring of 1870, the author noted in his hero that "he ... scorned everyone to such a degree that he took no special precautions and made a lot of mistakes." ²

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, p. 435.

² F. M. Dostoevsky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 97.

In the most secret prison in tsarist Russia, the Alexeyevsky Ravelin of the Peter and Paul Fortress, a special, extremely secret and strict regime of imprisonment was created for Nechayev. Neither he, nor anyone else was allowed to use his name, and he was henceforward known as Number 5. Weekly reports on his health and the way in which he spent his time were submitted, every Friday, for many years, first to the Chief of the Gendarmerie and Chief of the Third Section, Count Pavel Shuvalov and then to his successors (A. L. Potapov, N. V. Mezentsev, A. P. Drenteln and P. A. Cherevin).

But the peculiarities of his imprisonment were not confined simply to an increased surveillance. For many years he was allowed not only to read and, until 1876, to write, but to obtain books and journals at the expense of the Third Section. The following is a letter which Nechayev wrote to the commandant of the fortress when once he did not receive a book he had requested: "General! If, by some stretch of the imagination it has been decided that it's too difficult to obtain Louis Blanc's *Histoire de la Revolution Francaise*, for me, then please allow me to ask you to substitute for the aforementioned, one of the following works permitted in Russia:

1. *Die Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften* von Robert von Mohl;
2. *La guerre et la paix* par Proudhon
3. *Revue des Deux Mondes* for the first half of 1872, especially the issues which contain my articles as I really am in need of them now... I have been given only the second, third and fifth volumes of Gervinius' *Geschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts seit den Wiener Verträgen* (History of the Nineteenth Century); if the remainder are not available in translation, then it's all the same to me and even better to have them in German.

"Allow me to hope, General, that my request will not be refused."

The request was reported to the Tsar. As a result, Count Shuvalov gave permission to A. F. Schulz, the

head of the Third Section to allow books according to his own discretion. Schulz not only allowed the books, but in reference to the *Revue* added that he would send his own copies for the entire year 1872.¹

Similar niceties were hardly in the tradition of the bureaucrats of the Third Section. In posing the question as to what the motives were for this obliging attention and tolerant attitude on the part of the higher-ups, the historian P. E. Shchegolev rightly suggests that the answer will be found in the area of psychology.

"In their timid and deferential amazement, they had to convince themselves that Nechayev's belief in his revolutionary ideas was boundless and unwavering, exclusive to the point of fanaticism. The people of the Third Section did not believe in the Orthodox God as ardently as Nechayev believed in the Russian revolution...

"During the trial, his belief in the correctness of his cause, and its depth, breadth and immutability bothered his investigators, the judges and the higher-ranking jailers. No matter what they might say about him, and no matter how they might try to hide it from themselves, the influence of this fanatic individual was ever prevalent. They were confused to such a degree that they lost their usual tone and manner of speaking when they had to deal with Nechayev... There was no peace and no self-possession in the Third Section's attitude toward Nechayev. During his incarceration they were always nervous: could it be that they had been 'infected' by Nechayev's nervousness? From slightly relaxed conditions the higher-ups, with a sort of enjoyment, went over to more severe conditions and torture..."²

In February, 1876, after Nechayev's petition to the Tsar to re-examine his case and schedule a public hearing, all of his writing instruments and written works were confiscated. Among the latter were parts of his aforementioned novel *Georgette*, fragments from other novels (*For Whom Is the Future?*, *On the Waters*, and *Une vieille connaissance*), *Recollections of Paris*

¹ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, pp. 225-26.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.

and a number of fragments from other, unfinished prose works.

Nechayev's literary heritage contained publicistic articles as well, the best of which were, according to the clerk charged with gathering up these documents, dedicated to a description and analysis of the character of the student movement of the 1860s.

The author of the review of Nechayev's archive was an educated individual and completely objective. When finishing his job, he made his own opinion, hardly lacking in insight on Nechayev as an individual, quite clear. He was shocked by the prisoner's thoughts on the subject of hate as a necessary emotion which gives the social activist power. He saw a "sort of self-delight in the contemplation of the strength of his hatred of all prosperous people. He also saw in Nechayev the intentional development of his untried, in terms of their foundation and legality, instincts which placed him in conflict with the existing order. And all of these are the traits of a revolutionary not by conviction, but rather by temperament, as the author sees himself, with no little self-satisfaction. Perhaps his influence on people is due, in part, to these traits, people who are less developed and less used to a critical assessment of their own opinions."¹

Nechayev's archives, which contain some of the most important data for explaining many traits of his character and for refining his political theories and practical actions, were to be burned immediately after the review was completed by the anonymous reviewer. And Nechayev himself, after a stormily expressed protest, was transferred to another cell in chains, on both his feet and hands. The first of these were removed only three months later, and he stayed handcuffed for nearly two years. It was only in 1880 that he was able to obtain the right to use books necessary for his work from the authorities.

In 1877 the prisoner, still in handcuffs, found a new means of fighting from inside the walls of the ravelin. He began a propaganda campaign among the soldiers on duty and charged with guarding him.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

Somewhat later, a member of the Executive Committee of the People's Will (a militant revolutionary organisation from the end of the 1870s and the 1880s) by the name of Lev Tikhomirov was able to recall, on the basis of Nechayev's letters from the ravelin, the psychological aspect of Nechayev's influence on the soldiers.

"The guard in the ravelin," he wrote, "had not changed in the last few years. Nechayev had the opportunity to look each one over and taking advantage of this, was able to single out many who would be perfect for his plans. Even in chains, Nechayev still could have an effect on many of the guards... It happened that the jailer was under orders not to answer, but this didn't bother Nechayev. With all the passion of a martyr, he continued talking about his sufferings, about the injustice of his fate and of the people. 'You stay silent... You are not allowed to speak. But you know, friend, why I'm here! ... For their sake, for his fathers and brothers you're going to waste your life. And then they'll grab you and chain you up and that very same idiot will be assigned to you...' And it would happen that the soldier, stung to the quick, would not be able to restrain himself and would mumble something about duty, about his oath. But Nechayev was waiting specifically for that. He would begin to talk about the Tsar, the people, about what duty is, etc." ¹ He would use other methods as well. And in one way or another all the guards of the ravelin eventually came under the propagandistic influence of the secret prisoner.

In November, 1880, when S. G. Shiryayev, a member of the Executive Committee of the People's Will was sentenced to an indefinite term of imprisonment and incarcerated in the ravelin, Nechayev was able to enter immediately into a correspondence with him, through the help of his guards. From these letters he found out about the condition of the revolutionary movement outside the walls of the prison. He then was able to enter into immediate dealings

¹ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, pp. 258-59.

with the militant revolutionary organisation preparing the next attempt on the Tsar.

No one among the revolutionaries after 1872 knew anything about Nechayev's fate. Therefore, his first letter from the ravelin was extremely unexpected since up to that time not a word had reached the outside.

"Nechayev's letter," wrote Vera Figner, a member of the Executive Committee, "had a strictly business-like character; there was nothing effusive in it, not the least little bit of sentimentalism, not a word about what had been in the past and what he had been living through now. He simply put forward the question of his escape. He wrote like a revolutionary who had only been temporarily out of the battle; he wrote to his friends who were still free. The letter made a wonderful impression: everything suddenly disappeared, everything that made such a black mark on Nechayev, the whole of that lie which had entangled that revolutionary image. All that was left was logic, which had not dimmed in those long years of isolation; will, which had not been bent by the weight of a disastrous punishment; and energy, which had not been spent on all the failures of his life. When this petition was read at the Committee's meeting, we all responded with an unusual spiritual upsurge: we must free him."¹

But the limited resources of the People's Will were engaged at this time in the preparations for the attempt on the Tsar; more specifically, in digging a tunnel under the Malaya Sadovaya (which belonged to one of the routes often taken by Alexander II). In addition, according to the opinion offered by Tikhomirov, a break-out from "such a state hiding place like the Alexeyevsky Ravelin would undoubtedly throw the government into a panic and force the assassination attempt to be postponed indefinitely. Nechayev and Shiryayev were given the responsibility of choosing which of these two undertakings should be of first importance and they chose 1 March [the date set for the attempt on Alexander II—*N.P.*], in spite of the fact that Zhelyabov had already

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

examined the ravelin and had pronounced an escape, especially with adequate help from the outside, not only realisable, but even not particularly difficult.”¹

Forced to refuse freedom, Nechayev continued to attentively follow the activities of the People's Will, to read its publications and offer the revolutionaries his own recommendations.

He considered the tactics of the People's Will to be “too conscientious”. “Don't forget that because of a bourgeois conscientiousness a successful organisation is being held back and this will give the forces of the people's enemies time to strengthen themselves. This conscientiousness makes the struggle more difficult, and therefore instead of hundreds, hundreds of thousands of people must be destroyed.”²

Nechayev persistently demanded unified command, a revolutionary dictatorship in the party and suggested Andrei Zhelyabov as a candidate to fill the vacancy of dictator. He was also dissatisfied with the movement's attitude to society.

“Why,” he asked, “was a donation of 5,000 or 8,000 rubles made public knowledge in *The Messenger of the People's Will*, when it was clearly necessary to add two more zeros to the figures? Why, in general, is it necessary to ask for public support? The committee ... must rouse society or the people and promise them their support and not the other way around. Both enemies and friends alike,” he instructed the People's Will, “must be blinded by the brilliance of your strength.”³

The People's Will brought their struggle to an end with the assassination of Alexander II on 1 March 1881. He was killed in the explosion of a bomb thrown by a member of the People's Will. The assassination was immediately followed by arrests which destroyed the basic foundation of the organisation's power.

The arrests of Andrei Zhelyabov and Sophia Perovskaya turned up letters from Nechayev, but

¹ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, p. 277.

² B. Nikolayevsky, “In Memory of the Last Jacobin of the 1870s”, in *Penal Servitude and Exile*, No. 2/23, Moscow, 1926, (in Russian).

³ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, pp. 293-94.

their authorship was not immediately established. And until late autumn, 1881, he managed to escape suspicion. The very thought that anti-government activity could originate from that bastion so cut off from the rest of the world was considered impossible. But reality does not always confine itself to dogmatic concepts. The will and energy of one man turned out to be stronger than all the repressive measures, all the strict conditions of imprisonment and the impregnable walls of the ravelin.

P. E. Shchegolev, relying on documents, attempts, in the following way, to present a picture of the ravelin in the autumn of 1881: "In the guard room ... soldiers are not only reading the newspapers, but the latest proclamations and the last issues of the *People's Will*; some of them are even learning to write letters in code, according to Nechayev's instructions. Out in the corridor the guards on duty walk around without any system of seniority, and near the door to No. 5, non-commissioned police officer is seated on a chair from the guard room and is enjoying a story being told by Prisoner No. 5. Or this same No. 5, who has been deprived of his right to write and had written his complaints to the authorities in his own blood (not having any ink) would sit at his desk, assiduously writing or coding notes for the outside while the convoy was guarding him: who knows what may happen! And since last evening, the senior guard's replacement ... had copied out the last names from the duty roster, of the guards who were supposed to stand watch over No. 5 the next day and passed along the list to Nechayev. Nechayev considered the roster and gave them little assignments. Often the soldiers received a premium. Nechayev received money from the outside, but he himself never passed it out; he would give it to one of the soldiers and then he would pass out tickets which were marked with a certain sum. The banker would then give the money to the ticket holder."¹

Under such circumstances, even after the catastrophe which befell the *People's Will*, Nechayev could construct new plans for his escape. He was occupied

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-94.

specifically with this right up until his activities were betrayed to the commandant by the ravelin's second inmate, L. Mirsky. On 29 December 1881, 42 men, the guard staff of the Alexeyevsky Ravelin, were arrested and imprisoned in solitary confinement in the Trubetskoy Bastion. Then soldiers outside the fortress were also arrested. As a result, 69 men were brought under inquiry. On that same day, 29 December, Nechayev was transferred to cell No. 1 and there he stayed until the end of his days. He died on 21 November 1882.

The secret with which the authorities attempted to cover Nechayev's life in the ravelin, did not stay a secret after his death. His body was taken from the ravelin in one of the casemates from the Ekaterinovskaya Curtain of the Peter and Paul Fortress "in order to disperse any rumours that the Alexeyevsky Ravelin holds criminals". The Minister of Internal Affairs, V. K. Plehve ordered that the body be transferred for burial to Constable Pankratov, with the order that the surname be kept in the strictest secrecy.

Pankratov's last report is as follows: "The body of the deceased taken from the fortress was received at the Preobrazhenskaya Station of the Nikolaevskaya Railway at 1 o'clock in the morning."¹ The place of burial remains unknown.

¹ P. E. Shchegolev, *The Alexeyevsky Ravelin*, p. 364.

HERMANN LOPATIN, THE GALLANT RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY

Gallant youths — this is how the Russian people refer to men who are as brave and strong as knights of old. And Hermann Alexandrovich Lopatin, one of the most interesting and colourful Russian revolutionaries of the 19th century, was a gallant youth indeed.

“What didn’t he see in his life! He was tossed from a position as a governor’s official to a gaol in the Caucasus, from the Caucasus to Italy, where he saw battle at Menton, then a visit to Herzen; on to Siberia where he lived for three years; next he sailed one thousand versts¹ down the Angara, lived in Shenkursk for a time, moved on to London, then Zurich and next Paris. He saw everything; his life was an entire poem. He was fluent in three languages, knew how to talk to a member of parliament, to a constable, to a peasant. He could himself pretend to be a constable, a peasant, or a fool. And at the same time he could mount a rostrum and give an interesting lecture on anything at all. He was an outstanding individual.”²

The above description was provided by the Russian writer Gleb Uspensky, who for several months lived side by side with the famous revolutionary in the Latin Quarter of Paris. Uspensky had wanted to write Lo-

¹ A Russian unit of distance equal to 0.6629 mile.

² G. I. Uspensky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1957, p. 291 (in Russian).

patin's biography (he had even decided the title — *The Gallant Youth*), but his subject was so original and unusual that he found he couldn't do justice to him in a book.

Lopatin first emigrated in 1870, then in 1873 and lived abroad until 1879, and in 1883. During these intervals he made many trips back to Russia. His life was dedicated to the liberation of his homeland, and he knew many of the leading revolutionaries of the period: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Alexander Herzen, Mikhail Bakunin and others.

Lopatin had the honour to be the first to translate Marx's *Das Kapital* into a foreign language — Russian. And he did it so well that he earned the respect and admiration of Marx. The great founder of scientific socialism told his friends there was hardly anyone who understood as well as Lopatin what he had done and what he intended to do in the subsequent volumes of his work.¹ And Marx's affection for Lopatin was sincere: "There are few people in the world of whom I am so fond and whom I esteem so much."²

Petr Lavrov, a well-known Russian revolutionary who knew both Marx and Lopatin, once commented about Marx's respect for Lopatin: "The eminent teacher of socialism was very demanding of the people he befriended."³

Abroad for the First Time

Hermann Lopatin had not planned to leave Russia, but a turning point in the history of Italy — the campaign to unite the country — called him away.

...November 1867. A man in a red shirt, the famous Giuseppe Garibaldi, was preparing to march on papal Rome, which was hindering efforts to unify Italy. Garibaldi had attracted a group of dedicated volunteers and was moving towards Rome. Telegraph messages carried this news around the world.

¹ See P. L. Lavrov, *Hermann Lopatin*, Petrograd, 1919, pp. 29-30 (in Russian).

² *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, Moscow, 1967, p. 241 (in Russian).

³ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 30.



Hermann Lopatin. 1870s-1880s



House No. 256 on High Holborn,
London, where meetings of the
General Council of the
International took place



London. Second half of the 19th
century



Nikolai Danielson. 1880s



Hermann Lopatin. 1908

In far-away, cold and damp St. Petersburg, the twenty-two-year-old Hermann Lopatin read a short announcement about Garibaldi's uprising.

"For your freedom and ours!" Since the 1830s this slogan had made the hearts of 19th-century Russian and Polish revolutionaries beat faster. The passionate and outspoken Hermann, who had already once been jailed in the tsarist fortress dungeon, heard this spirited call. He had not been held for long the first time he was arrested by tsarist authorities on suspicion of revolutionary activities: the investigators were unable to establish proof of his activities. Thinking him a tender youth who would never be capable of becoming a revolutionary, Inspector Nikiforaki signed the papers for his release.

For Lopatin, the call of Garibaldi, Italian people's hero and leader of the *Risorgimento*¹, to liberate Rome from papal rule was a personal summons. Almost the same day after hearing of Garibaldi's march, the Russian youth left Petersburg. After crossing the border illegally and with almost no money, he hurried to join the fighters for the unification of Italy. But Garibaldi's small and weakly-armed unit was defeated near Menton by the highly disciplined regular forces of the French Army that were protecting papal authority in Italy's central district.

The defeat was so quick that Lopatin had only had time to make it as far as Florence. So that his trip would not be in vain, he decided to head for Nice and try to meet the famous Russian exile Alexander Herzen. Along the way an incident occurred that vividly illustrates Lopatin's revolutionary character and his ardent support for Garibaldi's quest to unify Italy.

Somewhere near Nice, Lopatin walked into a small Italian tavern (he did not have the means to travel

¹ *Risorgimento* means resurrection in Italian. The movement for Italian national unity and independence which began after 1815. The risings of 1848-49 failed, but the Austrian War of 1859 was followed by the foundation of the Italian kingdom in 1861. The addition of Venetia to Italy in 1866, and of Rome in 1870, completed the *Risorgimento*.

by coach). The owner refused to allow the poorly dressed traveller to stay the night, but she did permit him to eat in the public dining hall.

A conversation about Garibaldi's defeat was in progress. Those who supported the victors were heaping abuse on the defeated leader, while those who supported Garibaldi were cowed and silent. But Lopatin could not contain himself. Mindless of the danger and speaking in broken Italian with a few phrases of French and Latin thrown in, he gave an impassioned speech in defence of, as he put it, the last knight of the 19th century.

His words were so zealous and brave that Garibaldi's opponents were thrown into a state of confusion and said nothing. His supporters remained silent as well, but their eyes glowed. When the crowd began to disperse, Lopatin rose to leave. To his surprise, the austere owner approached him and said: "It's late, foreigner, you can stay the night here. We have room."¹

On 11 November 1867 Lopatin arrived at Herzen's home and was received. Two letters written by Herzen to his friend Nikolai Ogarev, mention the meeting of the two revolutionaries — Herzen, already famous in Europe, and the young, still unknown Lopatin.

Lopatin remained in Herzen's home for two days, during which time the two men discussed the situation in Russia and the revolutionary movement abroad. Although the discussions were amicable (Lopatin later said that he and Herzen parted with mutual good feelings) and frank, they clearly revealed that the two men belonged to different generations of revolutionaries. Herzen had little in common with the young revolutionaries of the 1860s who were so democratic (nihilistic) in behaviour that they sometimes overstepped the boundaries of propriety. The young generation of revolutionaries wanted nothing to do with authority.

The above-mentioned letters of Herzen reveal that he was immediately impressed with Lopatin's intellect and his ability to make realistic assessments.

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

But there were a number of things he didn't like about the young man, things he didn't like in general about the young people entering the revolutionary struggle in the 1860s.

Herzen, who was brought up in an old aristocratic Russian family in the first decades of the 19th century and had studied the intricacies of Hegelian thought in the 1840s, disliked the crude bravado of the Russian democratic youth, their boundless vanity and their negation of all authority ("They don't read us in Russia," Herzen wrote Ogarev referring to Lopatin, "in general they don't trust the foreign press.")¹.

It is quite possible that Lopatin's recent personal experiences had something to do with the impression he made on Herzen the one time the two men met. Lopatin was dismayed that he had been unable to join Garibaldi's forces and also disheartened by the defeat suffered by the Italian revolutionaries. This apparently is why the observant Herzen described the young man as being "listless and tired" — traits not at all characteristic of Lopatin's nature.

Their meeting was brief. On the second day Herzen wrote his friend: "The Russian (of whom I wrote) has left for Petersburg — a five-day journey from here through Vienna."²

Thus ended Lopatin's first trip abroad. Though seemingly unsuccessful, the young man had gained invaluable experience by mixing with people from different European countries, learning a little about the European order, and making the personal acquaintance of Herzen. Lopatin preserved his friendship with the members of the Herzen family (Herzen himself died shortly after their meeting) in subsequent years.

After his trip abroad Lopatin realised the difficulty the language barrier posed to making contacts and began his study of foreign languages.

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Book I), Moscow, 1963, p. 232 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*

First Emigration

Spring 1870. This would be one of the most important years in Lopatin's hectic life. Little more than two years had passed since his first trip abroad, but these years were filled with events.

Lopatin had taken the path of open defiance of the tsarist regime, and government authorities already recognised him as an enemy. After spending time in the already familiar Peter and Paul Fortress (Lopatin stayed there several months after his second arrest), he was exiled to Stavropol Province in the Northern Caucasus. When he was arrested for a third time, after the gendarmes had acquired information about his views, he was threatened with exile to Siberia.

But it was no easy matter to subdue Lopatin's independent spirit. One cold day in January 1870, rather than wait for the authorities to decide his fate, Lopatin's friends helped him to escape from the Stavropol military guard-house where he was being held and return to Petersburg.

He did not leave the country immediately, for his friends had asked him to help in the escape of Petr Lavrov, a retired infantry artillery colonel, a revolutionary and a philosopher. Dressed as an officer, Lopatin was able to lead Lavrov out of the Vologda backwoods. Now he could arrange his own escape.

In March 1870 Lopatin illegally arrived in Paris and settled into the Latin Quarter. Working primarily as a translator in order to survive, Lopatin spent all his free time in getting to know more about the socio-political life in this large developed Western European city. It was the first time in his life he was given such an opportunity, and it is indicative that he immediately took up the cause of the workers.

One of the first things Lopatin did after arriving in Paris was to join the Paris organisation of the First International, the so-called social sciences circle.

This organisation of the International with the status of one of its sections was very popular among the Parisian workers. Lopatin enthusiastically attended the section's meetings and became involved

in its activities. Despite the still strong influence of the Proudhon ideology, the scientific socialist ideas of Marx and Engels were becoming more widely accepted among the French proletariat. One of the first proponents of Marxism in France was Charles Keller, an Alsatian and a man Lopatin came to know very well.

Keller spoke both French and German. After reading *Das Kapital* in German, he excitedly explained its provisions to the French youth. Lopatin was much impressed with Keller's fervour, and he remembered it the rest of his life.

The political situation in France was tense. Not long before Lopatin arrived Parisian workers held a 200,000 strong anti-monarchy demonstration to protest the killing of the journalist Victor Noir by Prince Napoleon. The crumbling Second Empire was trying to crush the opposition. On 20 March the court ruled against the Paris Bureau of the International headed by Eugène Varlin. On 30 April warrants were issued for the arrest of many leading members of the International.

The authorities were preparing additional action against the International. In June 1870, 34 members of the organisation were sentenced to prison and the organisation itself was disbanded.

But the revolutionaries were not intimidated by these repressive measures. The day following the sentencing, five members of the International — members of the commission on statistics that was set up by the Paris Federal Council (which included Charles Keller) — sent a routine document to the sections and included the following announcement:

"Today, after the legal dissolvment of the International, we will continue this work under our own name until it once again becomes possible for us to render accounts before those who appointed us." ¹

Lopatin, however, was not in Paris at this time. In early May he left for Switzerland, where the situation was also tense.

¹ Jacques Duclos, *Bakounine et Marx. Ombre et lumière*, Plon, Paris, 1974, p. 101.

First of all, there was a growing conflict between different trends in the organisations of the International. In April 1870 at the congress of the Federation of the Romance Sections in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the Bakuninists managed to win a small majority. When the Bakuninists tried to win the right to include their supporters in addition to the regular delegates, the Geneva section, which supported the General Council, refused. The disagreement arose when the Bakuninists tried to obtain the authority of the central leading body of the International in Switzerland.

There was also disagreement among the rather numerous community of Russian emigrants: a dispute waged between the followers of Nikolai Utin and the Bakunist-anarchists. Already in March 1870, in other words right at the time when Lopatin arrived in Paris, a small group of Russian emigrants that had united around Utin organised the Russian section of the First International in Switzerland and asked Marx to be its representative. The section was accepted into the International, and Marx agreed to represent it in the General Council.

On his way to Switzerland, Lopatin thought of how the Russian revolutionary emigrants might be united. But the meetings he attended showed him how deep were the differences between the emigrants and the impracticality of his plan. It should be noted, however, that Lopatin's proposal to put out a magazine in an effort to rally the Russian revolutionaries was later implemented by Lavrov in the publication of the magazine *Vperyod!* (Forward!).

But the most important thing that happened to Lopatin on this trip to Switzerland was his meeting with Mikhail Bakunin. While still in exile in Stavropol Province, Lopatin had tried to mend ties with the man who was at that time an inspiration to a significant part of the Russian revolutionary youth. His efforts were, however, unsuccessful, for Lopatin could not agree with Bakunin's ideas as to what constituted acceptable means of action. He was unable to countenance the famous anarchist's unscrupulous choice of methods and friends.

Lopatin wished to spread certain moral norms among the youth. He, like many other progressive Russians of the 19th century (including the famous Russian revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevsky and the world renowned Leo Tolstoy) showed great interest in the works of the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, particularly his ideas concerning the creation of a new science of morality and the need to observe its norms.

Therefore Lopatin looked with disgust upon Bakunin's friendship with a man like Sergei Nechayev who acted according to the dubious motto: "The end justifies the means." Nechayev, who had arranged the murder of Ivan Ivanov in Moscow, was at this time hiding in Switzerland and trying to blackmail Lopatin's friend Nikolai Lyubavin. Well aware of Nechayev's true background, Lopatin demanded a meeting with Bakunin.

Lopatin met with Bakunin twice in May 1870. Nechayev himself was present at the second meeting. At both meetings Lopatin bitterly denounced Nechayev's Jesuitical system of systematically deceiving his comrades.

A letter written by Bakunin to Nechayev some time later sheds light on this important event in the Russian revolutionary movement: "[Lopatin] was victorious. You quailed before him. I cannot tell you, my dear friend, how bad I felt for you and for myself. I could no longer doubt the truth of Lopatin's words. So, you systematically lied to us. So, all your deeds were permeated with putrid lies, they were built on sand... So, everything for which you so wholeheartedly dedicated your life burst, dissipated like smoke, the result of a false, stupid orientation, the result of your Jesuitical system that corrupted you and, to a greater extent, your friends."¹

Lopatin's success in uncovering Nechayev's destructive methods was a significant contribution to the Russian revolutionary movement. It should be noted for the sake of objectivity that though Lopatin

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 96, Moscow, 1985, p. 519 (in Russian).

had no compunction about revealing Nechayev's unscrupulous methods, he did not wish to compromise Bakunin, who supported Nechayev. Lopatin believed that, considering Bakunin's contribution to the revolutionary movement, harsh criticism of the elderly anarchist would not be in the interests of further development of the movement in Russia.

But Lopatin did not support Bakunin's position in the International. Apparently this was due to the young man's naive attempts to do the impossible: persuade Bakunin to cease attacking the General Council and Karl Marx. Of course, nothing came of this — Bakunin's ideas were simply not compatible with Marx's theory of scientific socialism.

The relationship between Lopatin and Bakunin was complicated. The elder revolutionary made a considerable impression on the young Lopatin when the two men met in Switzerland. According to Petr Lavrov, "Lopatin had the opportunity to appraise Bakunin and to realise the fascinating traits that made it possible for the famous agitator to exert influence in all the countries in which he spread his activities, and the weaknesses, which temporarily allowed him to be influenced by Nechayev and often made an unpleasant impression on people who accidentally came into contact with him when his circumstances were unfavourable."¹

But Lopatin's most important undertaking during his first emigration was his translation of Marx's *Das Kapital*.

In the late 1860s a group of progressive Petersburg youth with an interest in social and economic issues organised a circle for the study of the latest foreign literature. The circle included Nikolai Danielson, Mikhail Negreskul, and Nikolai Lyubavin — almost all graduates of the Petersburg School of Commerce and seriously interested in political economy. Because of its secrecy, Lopatin referred to the circle as *Skit*, a word that had been used in Russia for centuries to describe a place where persecuted people hid from authorities.

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

The group began their study with the works of Ferdinand Lassalle. When they came across a reference to Karl Marx as "our teacher", the members decided to read *A Critique of Political Economy* and then the first volume of *Das Kapital*.

Much impressed with Marx's book, on 18 September 1868 Danielson sent word to Marx through Lyubavin and on behalf of the progressive Russian publisher Nikolai Polyakov that his work had been published and asked for the second volume.

In response Marx agreed to having his book translated and recommended that the publisher not wait for the second volume to be written since the first was "itself a completed whole".

At the request of Lyubavin, Bakunin, who was still highly regarded among the Russian revolutionaries, agreed to translate the work. But he accomplished little, and eventually refused the job altogether when he began his friendship with Nechayev. (See Chapter "Around and About Sergei Nechayev".

Meanwhile, Lopatin left Paris in June 1870 and moved to England. There was a number of reasons behind his move, not the least of which was his desire to become acquainted with Russian emigrants living in England. Lopatin was also very interested in the English social life, particularly the workers' movement there.

Another factor pushing Lopatin to leave France was the increasingly tense situation in the country. The French government was making decisive preparations for war with Prussia, a war that did indeed break out a month after Lopatin's departure. And in England, Lopatin thought, he could find more work as a translator, the principal way he earned his living abroad.

Lopatin knew that Marx was living in London. Before leaving for England, he obtained a letter of recommendation to Marx from his son-in-law Paul Lafargue. Lopatin was also asked to deliver a book to Marx, and he was only too pleased to have another pretext to pay the famous theoretician a visit.

Lopatin's move to England was a significant event in his life. It was here that he became personally

acquainted with Marx, joining his circle of intimates. When writing to Danielson, Marx often referred to Lopatin as "our mutual friend", "our friend".

The meeting between the two men occurred on Saturday, 2 July 1870. Marx invited Lopatin to return on Sunday, and the next day he arrived at one o'clock in the afternoon. "So I set out and paid Marx a visit," Lopatin wrote Petr Lavrov soon afterwards, "and I don't regret it one bit, because the meeting was one of the pleasantest I have ever had."¹

The first trait Lopatin noticed in Marx was "the total absence of a professor's demeanour, which is apparent among so many of the 'famous' in their dealings with youth and 'mere mortals' in general. Marx's harsh sarcasm...was directed only against 'enemies'. Flashes of irony and good-natured teasing occurred in conversations with a 'friend', but there was nothing to dampen one's ardour, nothing harsh".²

That the two men were mutually interested in one another is reflected by the length of his visit (the second time Lopatin saw Marx he remained from one o'clock in the afternoon until twelve midnight) and the number of topics they discussed.

In a letter to Engels written on 5 July 1870³, Marx reveals some of these topics: Lopatin's biography, including his two-year imprisonment and arrest in the Caucasus and his escape abroad; his studies at the University of Petersburg and his life as an emigrant.

Marx astutely noted Lopatin's personality traits: "A very wide-awake *critical* brain, cheerful character, stoical, like a Russian peasant who simply accepts what he gets."⁴

Naturally, the two men spent most of their time discussing the Russian revolutionary movement. The first topic Marx brought up was the question concerning the link between the Russian and Polish revolutionary movements, and here he thought Lopatin did

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, Moscow, 1969, p. 129 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1988, pp. 530, 531.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

not show a proper understanding of events: "Weak point: *Poland*. Here he talks just like an Englishman — say an English Chartist of the old school — does about Ireland." ¹

The parallel between the English enslavement of Ireland and Russian tsarism in Poland was undeniable. Evidently Lopatin was inconsistent here in his evaluation of the situation and did not totally support the position of the Polish revolutionaries.

The next topic Lopatin and Marx discussed was the activities of Sergei Nechayev. This was a subject Lopatin knew very well and could provide Marx with many new and valuable facts: about Nechayev's personality, his false methods, and his friendship with Bakunin. Marx was very interested to hear details about how Lopatin disclosed Nechayev's schemes to Bakunin in Geneva. Later Marx would use this information to fight Bakunin's divisive actions in the International.

Marx and Lopatin also discussed the fate of two leading Russian revolutionaries who were being mercilessly persecuted by the tsarist regime. The first was Nikolai Chernyshevsky, a leader of Russian revolutionary democracy who had been illegally sentenced to hard labour in Eastern Siberia on trumped-up charges.

Marx wrote: "The *Senate*, on the Tsar's orders, ... sent off to Siberia this cunning man who, as the judgement said 'was so clever that he cast his writing in a legally unexceptionable form, but nevertheless publicly dispensed poison therein'. *Voilà la justice russe*." ²

The second revolutionary Marx was interested in and wanted to learn about from Lopatin was Vasily Bervi-Flerovsky, author of the book, *The Condition of the Working Class in Russia*, and a man strongly persecuted by tsarist authorities for his socialist convictions. Bervi-Flerovsky had been sentenced to prison and exile many times. Marx thought highly of his book, calling it a "magnificent work", and wrote:

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 43, P. 530.

² *Ibid.*, p. 531.

"You can see that the man has travelled about everywhere and observed things for himself." ¹

In his talks with Lopatin, Marx revealed his goodwill and patience towards the young revolutionaries. Lopatin wrote that he had feared a "cool reception... What a pleasant surprise! I cannot say that Marx received me politely because that would be putting it mildly. In the end he was more warm than polite. His wife told me she would be offended if I came to London and stayed in a hotel, that I would always have a separate room in their home: 'No one will bother you; you can roam around the whole day if you like and come home just to sleep... You should know that a place at our table will always be waiting for you.'" ²

Lopatin left for Brighton completely charmed by Marx and his family. For the rest of his life he would feel respect and gratitude for his new acquaintances, the more so since he and Marx continued to hold lively discussions about the Russian and international revolutionary movements.

Marx informed Lopatin of the case against the members of the Paris Federation of the International. Lopatin called them his "Paris brethren", and in fact, he did know many of them personally. Marx sent Lopatin a message concerning the trial, so we may assume that the International was another topic discussed during their first two meetings.

Lopatin valued his friendship with Marx and especially liked that "Marx concentrated on the essence of ideas, and the conversation was precisely on that — the essence of a subject. And if he found his conversation partner to be very interested in the subject, then a kind of equality was established in the relationship, regardless of the rank and the degree of knowledge of the subject." ³

Lopatin's desire to associate with Marx was one of the major reasons he decided to move to London

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 423-24.

² *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 130.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

in early August 1870. As soon as he rented a room, he hurried to see Marx.

Lopatin rented an inexpensive room. As he described it in a letter to Petr Lavrov, "My room isn't much. The window overlooks the courtyard and stables. The furnishings are far from opulent, but I feel comfortable there."¹

The part of London where Lopatin chose to live was indicative: not far from the British Museum with its famous library and also close to the workers quarters, where he could observe the life of the English workers.

Lopatin described Marx's sharp intellect as "acting on a conversation partner like flint on steel; he drew out ideas from the mind of another which might otherwise have remained hidden".²

Lopatin's personal contact with Marx led him to understand the need to quickly translate *Das Kapital*. As has already been noted, the first attempts to do this were unsuccessful. Now, however, Lopatin began to think that his friendship with Marx could help resolve this problem.

The first mention of Lopatin's translation is made in a letter from Lopatin to Lavrov. In turning down Lavrov's proposal that he move to Paris in order to take part in some kind of literary undertaking, Lopatin wrote:

"I can by no means accept your proposal sooner than in four or five months and this is why: I have been asked many times to translate Marx's *Das Kapital*, and I have always refused. But of late, when I had almost read the entire book, I saw that I could translate it, especially considering the fact that I am living in the same city with the author. Also the translation of Louis Blanc fell through and I was without work. They are offering about 1,000 roubles for *Das Kapital* with the right to take as much as the whole sum in advance. (It is understood that I will take nothing.) And so I agreed and promised..."³

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 147.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

The translation, however, turned out to be very difficult, especially the first chapters where Lopatin described the terminology as "metaphysical". After considerable work, Lopatin told Marx that "for the Russian reader these chapters might be an obstacle and could make the book less enjoyable".¹ Marx suggested beginning the translation with the third chapter and promised to rework the first two chapters especially for the Russian edition (Marx kept his promise, but the reworked chapters did not appear until the French edition).

Lopatin's friend and fellow-revolutionary Nikolai Danielson described the conscientiousness with which the translator worked on the book:

"After beginning the translation of *Das Kapital*, Lopatin in many cases went to the British Museum library in order to gain a better understanding of the quotes from other authors. Here he came to really know the authors Marx cited. Sometimes he noted among these authors more tangled thinking than that which Marx had cited. In such cases Marx accepted Lopatin's comments and gave corresponding additional information."²

Danielson cited as an example of this a case where Marx added remarks about the tangled thoughts of the economist Nassau Senior criticised by Marx. And Danielson noted that Marx's further explanation appeared for the first time in the Russian edition.

"Sometimes," Danielson continued, "Lopatin found that the remarks of the author might confuse the reader and would in this part of the translated text make a corresponding footnote and let Marx know of it. Marx agreed with this and in subsequent editions of the original the same footnote appeared in the text.... This clearly shows how conscientious the translator was about his work and to what extent he delved into the crux of the ideas of the author."³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

² *Minuyshiye gody* (The Bygone Years), January, 1908, p. 39 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*

It was only with Marx's invaluable and constant help that Lopatin was able to overcome the numerous difficulties that arose with the translation. These included the Russian transcription of complicated political-economic terminology and the translation of the large number of English, Latin, Greek and other foreign language texts that the author used in the German edition.

Lopatin and Marx frequently took long walks around London. Lopatin later recalled that they walked even in the "farthest ends of London". While they walked they discussed an array of topics, including world literature and history. "Marx knew everything and from everything drew valuable conclusions. And what about the years and epochs he himself had experienced! Here his knowledge in the sphere of social and political facts and also in the sphere of biography was exceptional," Lopatin later observed with sadness. "He loved me like a father. We often met, grew excited and argued...but so much that was important remained unexplained. There was much I should have learned and advice I should have sought." ¹

Lopatin's close association with Marx broadened his worldview and increased his knowledge and understanding about the complexities of the laws of world development. In other words, he acquired the qualities without which it would have been impossible to understand and translate *Das Kapital*, "the chief and basic work in which scientific socialism is expounded", according to V. I. Lenin.²

As the two men came to know each other better, Marx's confidence in Lopatin increased. He even called the young Russian revolutionary the "only 'solid' Russian of all those I have met".³

Lavrov knew of Marx's trust in Lopatin and his high regard for the young man's work as a translator: "There were few people about whom Karl Marx

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, pp. 48-49.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1986, p. 185.

³ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 28.

spoke to me with such warmth and such respect for intellect as H[ermann] A[lexandrovich] Lopatin]. There was hardly anyone who understood as well as Lopatin what he had done and what he intended to do in the subsequent volumes of his work.”¹

Another aspect of Lopatin's life in London affected his work on the translation of *Das Kapital*: the young man was becoming increasingly involved in the affairs of the International. Lopatin had long been interested in the activities of the organisation, since he had joined the Paris Section in 1870. In London, on 20 September 1870, at the suggestion of the socialist representative of the Paris Section, Auguste Serrailier, Lopatin was elected a member of the General Council. The fact that Marx supported the proposal helped ensure the unanimous vote.

As soon as he was elected, Lopatin joined the committee for the organisation of a protest against the aggressive actions of Prussia, whose troops had by that time invaded France. Karl Marx and the General Council unleashed a campaign in defence of the newly proclaimed French Republic.

Lopatin together with the other members of the committee — Johann-George Eccarius, Friedrich Lessner, James Cohn and George Milner — was engaged in organising a mass demonstration of London workers. The British Prime Minister himself, William Gladstone, was compelled to receive the delegation of representatives of the workers' organisations (Lopatin was among these representatives) and listened to their demand to assist in concluding a just peace.

Lopatin was very impressed and long remembered the fact that the prime minister of one of the strongest capitalist states in Europe had to receive a delegation of workers formed by the International. Here was an example of the strength of the international socialist movement. Once again Lopatin saw the glaring contrast with the political situation of the workers in tsarist Russia, where participating in a strike could lead to arrest and exile from the cities.

Unfortunately, Lopatin's energetic activities abroad

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

were cut short in late November 1870 when he was absorbed in his plans to organise the escape of Nikolai Chernyshevsky from Siberia and return the great Russian revolutionary and scientist to an active life in society. Lopatin was moved by Marx's words that the "political death of Chernyshevsky was a loss not only for the scientific world in Russia but in all of Europe" and that "the Russians should be ashamed that not one had yet tried to acquaint Europe with such a remarkable thinker".¹

Thus when Lopatin was asked to return to Russia to organise Chernyshevsky's escape, he immediately agreed.²

Siberia

In the bitter cold of January 1872 Lopatin arrived in Irkutsk, the major city in Eastern Siberia. With a small group of friends from Petersburg and a little money, he was going to make a daring attempt to free Chernyshevsky. His task was the more difficult since no one knew just where Chernyshevsky was being held: officially, his term of exile had ended long ago. Lopatin remained in Irkutsk for a month to collect information, and this was what proved his undoing.

Before Lopatin had reached Irkutsk its authorities had already received information from Petersburg on preparations for Chernyshevsky's escape. One of Lopatin's few (if not only) friends abroad who knew of the escape plan had confided in someone who turned out to be a spy. With this information and relying on informers, it was not difficult for the authorities to disclose that Nikolai Lyubavin, respected member of the Geographical Society, was in fact Lopatin. On 1 February 1870 Lopatin was arrested.

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 46.

² Lopatin asked his friend Nikolai Danielson to continue his work on translating *Das Kapital*. With the help of another member of their circle, Nikolai Lyubavin, the translation was completed and in March 1872 the Russian edition came out in Petersburg.

The investigation dragged on. It was difficult for the spirited Lopatin to accept defeat. The first time he tried to escape from the district courthouse in July 1870 he was quickly apprehended. A furious guard was restrained with difficulty by other cossacks from killing the escapee with his sword. Once again Lopatin was incarcerated, this time behind the high walls of the Siberian prison.

Lopatin planned his next escape more carefully. In December 1871 he was released under police surveillance and forbidden to leave Irkutsk: the authorities had been unable to collect sufficient evidence to charge him with an offence more serious than living under a false name and using a falsified passport. Lopatin's newly acquired Siberian friends helped organise his escape.

Professor Afanasy Shchapov, who had become Lopatin's closest friend in Irkutsk, helped devise a daring and unusual plan whereby Lopatin would flee north, along the Angara River towards the Arctic Ocean (the traditional, short escape route was through European Russia and on to the West). Tatiana Chaikovskaya, the wife of a mining district police officer Sevastian Chaikovsky who in his youth had participated in the Polish uprising of 1864, helped Lopatin with his escape.

As Lopatin later wrote, his escape required "courage, physical strength, endurance, good health, and again courage".¹ Many of his friends considered his plan "insane".

In the early morning hours of 3 August, Lopatin took a rifle, climbed into a rickety two-oar boat and stealthily began his dangerous journey down the Angara. He slept on islands, in the taiga close to the river's bank or in god-forsaken villages along the river banks. He ate what he managed to shoot or black bread bought from the local peasants.

Lopatin later described his journey: "After successfully avoiding the Angara's famous rapids, sailing amid the deafening roar of the water, the surrounding huge

¹ Karl Marx, *Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, p. 275.

waves that drenched my boat from bottom to top and the cliffs that towered on either side, I finally reached the Yenisei River, having travelled 2,500 versts in 24 days.”¹

Travelling further across the taiga, Lopatin came out at the Staroachinsk route and successfully made it to Tomsk. It seemed that all danger was behind him.

Lopatin later recalled: “My success gave me such a feeling of confidence that for the five days I was in Tomsk I didn’t alter my appearance at all. I walked around the city as carelessly as if I were in Paris or London. As a result, in September I was arrested on the main street in broad daylight.”²

Lopatin had been recognised by a policeman. Once he realised he had been caught, he calmly announced: “What can be done. I failed.” He was sent back to Irkutsk under heavy guard.

He planned another escape. This time he and his friends devised a completely different plan.

On 10 July 1873 Lopatin managed to escape from the district courthouse through a small window and ride out of town on a horse which was left there by his friends. He changed clothes and returned to Irkutsk, where he hid for several days in the homes of his friends and then in a hunting cottage outside the city. A short while later he joined a procession of peasant carts travelling to central Russia. “A strong and cheerful peasant youth walked between the cart drivers in a humble procession of carts travelling across the great Siberian route from Irkutsk to European Russia. He did the usual artel work just like everyone else, and he talked just like everyone else...”³

In the guise of a simple peasant, Lopatin made his way to Petersburg. He remained there several weeks, and in late autumn 1873 arrived once again in Paris.

¹ Karl Marx, *Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, p. 275.

² *Ibid.*

³ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

Lopatin's Second and Third Emigration

Throughout the three years when Lopatin was in Russia, Marx and Engels expressed their concern for "our mutual friend", and sought ways in which they could help him. Marx even came up with a plan to assist Lopatin "by means of diplomacy out of Constantinople". He was overjoyed at each piece of good news, and when he learned from Danielson in May 1872 that Lopatin had been released from prison, he wrote: "The news you have communicated to me on our *mutual friend* have delighted both myself and my family. There are few people in the world of whom I am so fond and whom I esteem so much."¹

Lopatin's second emigration began in 1873 and lasted almost six years. Settling in Paris and picking up his translation work, Lopatin quickly renewed contact with Marx and Engels and began to work with Russian revolutionary organisations and a number of West European socialists. Officially he preferred to remain politically independent and never joined any of the existing revolutionary populist organisations. In fact, however, he was closely tied with the publication of the magazine *Vperyod!* that had been started by his friend Petr Lavrov and acted as a kind of co-editor (though he said he would be quite vexed if people were to think "that I am never myself, that I am never anything other than a special reporter for *Vperyod!*").²

Lopatin waged an energetic campaign to help Chernyshevsky, whose official term of sentence had ended and who should have by law been allowed to live in any place (for the exception of large towns and cities) under surveillance. But the tsarist authorities ruthlessly violated all judicial norms and enforced even greater restrictions. They sent the revolutionary democrat to Vilyuisk beyond the Arctic Circle. In 1874 Chernyshevsky was excluded from the amnesty

¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 477-78.

² *Sovetskiye arkhivy* (Soviet Archives), 1974, № 3, p. 59.

granted by the tsar on the occasion of his daughter's marriage.

Lopatin tried to get the Western European public to help Chernyshevsky's situation. On 15 May 1874 he sent a letter to English newspapers disclosing the true nature of the amnesty, which he called a shameless farce. He also accused tsarist authorities of trying to throw dust in the eyes of civilised Europe. I would consider myself happy, he said, if I could bring the English press out of its delusion and present the matter in its true light.¹

Lopatin's open and sociable nature allowed him to maintain contacts with a wide circle of revolutionary organisations (Russian and foreign) and public figures. For a long time he acted as an intermediary between Marx and Engels and Lavrov. Often Lavrov would seek, through Lopatin, the comments of Marx and Engels on his magazine.

Lopatin was well aware of the importance of contacts between the Russian and the international revolutionary movements and made a concentrated effort to strengthen them. He eagerly accepted Engels's suggestion that he write an article for *Volks Kalender* concerning the court cases against Russian revolutionaries: "I did not for one minute think of this article as 'income'. I simply believed that I shouldn't let the opportunity slip to strengthen the tie between the Russian and the foreign movements by acquainting them with each other in such a widespread publication."²

Both Hermann Lopatin and the founders of scientific socialism believed in the necessity to promote closer ties between the Russian and international revolutionary movements. Lopatin concurred with Engels on the benefit of "international interaction".

"The Russians will have to bow to the inevitable international fate: their movement will henceforth develop in full view and under the surveillance of the rest of Europe," Engels wrote. "...Those who will derive

¹ See H. A. Lopatin, *Autobiography. Testimonies and Letters. Articles and Verse. Bibliography*, Part 2, 1922, p. 125 (in Russian).

² *Sovetskiye arkhivy*, 1974, № 3, p. 61.

the greatest benefit from the West's criticism, from the international interaction of the various West European movements on the Russian movement and vice versa, from the eventual fusion of the Russian movement with the all-European movement, are the Russians themselves." ¹

During his second stay abroad Lopatin maintained contact with many notable figures in the West European socialist movement: Arthur Arnould and Henri Rochefort of France; José Mesa of Spain; Karl Branting of Sweden; and César de Paepe of Belgium. He showed special interest in the growing activities of the German social democrats — Johann Philip Becker, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Carl Hirsch, and others, as well as of Polish socialists Walerí Wróblewski, Józef Uziembło, among others.

Lopatin constantly kept the members of the international socialist movement informed of the situation in Russia and discussed with them plans for further action. Risking his life, he often illegally crossed the border into Russia "in order to keep abreast of affairs in my native country". ² It is no mere chance that in his letters to Engels, one often observes the same motif more clearly: "I don't know if I have enough strength to stay any longer abroad." ³

Sometime in late 1878 or early 1879 Lopatin concluded that he could no longer remain abroad. After receiving yet another summons from his revolutionary friends in Russia, he "decided to return to Russia for good." ⁴

In spring 1879 Lopatin returned to Russia using a falsified passport and settled in Petersburg. With his former energy he began to organise secret addresses and devise plans for increased revolutionary activities. But the police was not caught napping. Lopatin's trusting nature was his downfall. According to Lavrov, Lopatin was "betrayed by a spy, a man so stupid

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1989, p. 28.

² P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

³ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia, p. 354.

⁴ H. A. Lopatin, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

and such a disgusting rake that no one thought it possible to suspect him. And Lopatin was certain that this man was totally devoted to him... Later Narodnaya Volya stated directly that Voronovich was a spy.”¹

Rumours about Lopatin's impending arrest circulated around the city, and his friends tried to warn him. But Lopatin was implacable. He believed it was his duty to be where the danger was. The famous Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, who had met Lopatin in France and was an old acquaintance, persistently warned him of the danger.

“The misfortune that befell Lopatin was inevitable: he seemed to have called it upon himself... I begged him to go south, because the police knew of his presence in Petersburg... Lopatin had insulted the person of Alexander Nikolayevich,² and this was unforgivable...”³

After a 13-month fortress imprisonment, Lopatin was exiled to Tashkent. Later his wife's influential relatives finally managed to persuade the authorities to send him to Vologda, and in spring 1883 he once again escaped to the West.

As soon as he arrived in Paris Lopatin heard dreadful news: the same day he crossed the border Karl Marx had died in London. Lopatin wrote Marx's daughter Eleanor: “The report of the disease of my respected and beloved friend was the first piece of news I heard in the moment of the stepping over the threshold of Lavrov... A delay of some few days deprived me of the happiness to embrace once more in the life this man whom I loved as a friend, respected as a teacher and revered as a father.”⁴

When telling his comrades about his first meeting with Engels after four years and noting their “total similarity of views” concerning the future of the revolutionary struggle, Lopatin would quote Engels: “Everything now depends on what will happen in the

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

² Turgenev is referring to the accusatory article Lopatin wrote and sent to Tsar Alexander II when he was abroad.

³ *Byloye* (The Past), 1906, № 2, p. 219 (in Russian).

⁴ *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, p. 485.

near future in Petersburg, which is the focus of attention of all thinking, far-sighted and perspicacious people in all of Europe.”¹

Lopatin decided to initiate discussions with the surviving members of the *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) concerning his more active participation in the revolutionary movement in Russia. Lavrov wrote that at that time Lopatin's love of independent action and aversion to being subordinate to any organisation “yielded to the realisation of the importance and difficulty of the questions that were coming to the fore”.²

Although this was a period when Lopatin was becoming more and more involved in the Russian movement, he nonetheless preserved his contacts with the workers of Western Europe. His description of a visit to an international socialist club in London in October 1883 is indicative. The majority of club members were workers. Lopatin arrived in the midst of a discussion between the workers and two clergymen, Christian socialists, who were fervently trying to prove to the workers the necessity for humility and non-resistance to evil by violence. The workers' remarks were weakly argued, unconvincing and their refutations were “more heated than substantiated, they were lost in details and digressive, which allowed the far from stupid and clever clergymen with a brilliant knowledge of if not socialism then dialectics to easily defeat them. In the end I couldn't restrain myself and jumped into the fray”.³

In the course of the ensuing argument, Lopatin drew attention to proof that the physical violence the Christian socialists found so repugnant was an unavoidable evil during those radical upheavals of a social system that are called revolutions.

Lopatin finished his speech to applause. “At the end of the meeting many strangers (including the clergymen) came up to shake my hand and express the wish

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 201.

² P. L. Lavrov, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

³ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 204.

of seeing me at other meetings and discussions. They assured me that my appalling language would not in any way prevent my thoughts from clearly breaking through this hazy covering and speaking to the minds of the listeners.”¹

This was one of the last times Lopatin spoke before foreign workers: affairs in Russia demanded his presence. In late autumn 1883 he returned to Petersburg and in effect took up the leadership of the crushed Narodnaya Volya movement.

The Narodnaya Volya situation was extremely difficult. Sergei Degayev had managed to work himself into the leadership and then betrayed many revolutionaries. The existence of the movement itself was threatened.

It is to Lopatin's honour that he was able to disclose the spy quickly and forced him to promise to eliminate a dangerous enemy, Colonel Georgi Sudeikin, special inspector of the secret police. On 16 December 1883, Sudeikin, who was visiting an apartment used by the conspirators on Nevsky Prospekt, and where Degayev lived, was entrapped and killed.

Lopatin continued his energetic work to restore the crushed revolutionary organisation. He visited dozens of Russian cities trying to rally and encourage the scattered revolutionaries. But investigators began to trail him in October 1884. In the evening on 6 October he was suddenly seized from all sides as he walked down Nevsky Prospekt.

Upon learning of his arrest Tsar Alexander III proclaimed: “I hope he will not escape again.”² And the authorities did indeed take all measures to ensure that Lopatin did not escape. After spending three years imprisoned in the Petersburg military district court, he was sentenced to death. This sentence was later commuted to life-imprisonment in a fortress. Lopatin spent eighteen long years in the terrible Shlisselburg fortress — the “Russian Bastille”.

¹ *Russian Contemporaries About Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, p. 205.

² Yu. V. Davydov, *Hermann Lopatin, His Friends and Enemies*, Moscow, 1984, p. 139 (in Russian).

The first Russian revolution in 1905 freed Lopatin. In poor physical health after his long imprisonment, he was unable to participate in public life. Lopatin died on 26 December 1918 in the city of revolution — Petrograd. The Petrograd Soviet organised his funeral.

Not long before Lopatin died, the exiled Bolshevik deputies of the State Duma appraised the outstanding role Lopatin had played in the Russian and international workers' movements.

"Recalling your brilliant and selfless work for the triumph of the principles of fraternity and freedom in our life, the representatives of the Russian working class, with a feeling of deep gratitude, consider it their duty to note that among the Russian thinkers dedicated to the study and development of the problems of socialism, you were one of the first to turn the thinking of the Russian workers' movement to the scientific sources of European and international socialism."¹

¹ O. A. Saikin, *The First Russian Translator of "Das Kapital"*, Moscow, 1984, p. 139 (in Russian).

IVAN TURGENEV, AN INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN WESTERN EUROPE AND RUSSIA

Varvara Turgeneva hesitated for a long time before allowing her son Ivan to continue his education at the University in Berlin. Just about anything could happen to him, either on the way there, or once he had arrived in that foreign land. But, all the same, she finally gave her consent and the departure date was set for 15 May 1838. In the morning of that day, Varvara Turgeneva had a farewell service held for her son in the Kazan Cathedral.

Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev was to go abroad by the ship *Nicholas I* sailing from Kronstadt, where he had arrived from St. Petersburg on a small steamer. All the passengers were boarded and the ship set sail. At first all went quite well: the crew was busy with its own affairs while the passengers rested.

But on the fourth day at sea a fire broke out on the ship. Fortunately, the accident occurred not far from the German port of Lübeck and nearly all the passengers were rescued. But the young Turgenev was quite frightened by the accident and was afraid that his life had come to an end at the tender age of 19.

Turgenev arrived in Berlin at the end of September 1838 and began his university studies, enrolling in courses on philosophy, history and ancient languages. While at the University he became close friends with two other Russian students: Timofei Granovsky and Nikolai Stankevich.



Turgenev's manor house in
Spasskoye-Lutovinovo. A painting
by Yakov Polonsky. 1881



**Pauline Viardot. A water-colour
by Petr Sokolov**



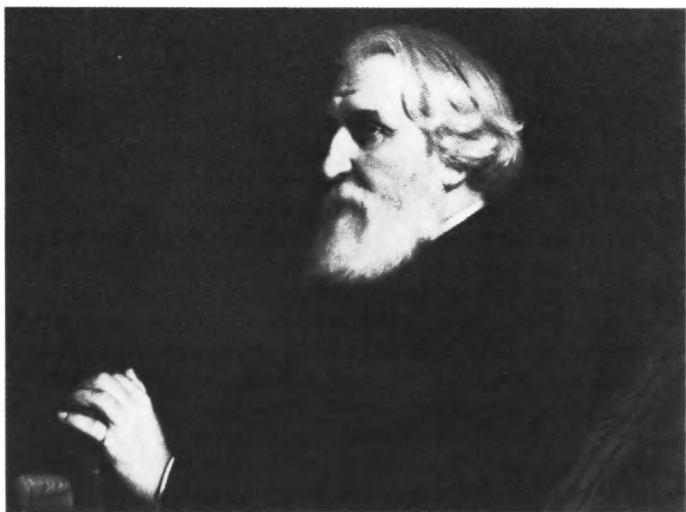
Ivan Turgenev. A charcoal drawing by Pauline Viardot

On the streets of Paris. A colour lithograph by F. Benois
1840s



St. Petersburg. Nevsky Prospekt
in front of the Anichkov
Palace. A water-colour by
V. S. Sadovnikov. 1840

A village. An oil painting by
Fyodor Vasilyev. 1869



Ivan Turgenev.
Portrait by Vasily Perov
Reading the peasants the
19 February 1861 Manifesto.
From a painting by Grigory
Myasoyedov



Turgenev's grave in the Volkov
Cemetery in Leningrad

Turgenev returned to Russia in the autumn of 1839, but in the middle of January 1840, he again went abroad.

While becoming better acquainted with Western Europe, Turgenev made a trip to Italy in 1840, arriving in Rome in the spring. Turgenev's arrival was quickly followed by that of Stankevich and the two began a series of long and fascinating walks around the Eternal City. They visited countless museums, art galleries, and palaces and were particularly impressed by the Colosseum, the Capitol and the Vatican Palace. Turgenev spent a few days in Naples where he got acquainted with the temperamental Neapolitans, and enjoyed the sights of the famous Bay of Naples and the local fishermen who enthusiastically plied their trade, selling the fruits of the sea.

From Italy, Turgenev set off for the German city of Frankfurt-on-the-Main where he visited Goethe's house before climbing aboard a diligence for Berlin.

In a letter to his friend Timofei Granovsky dated 30 May 1840, Turgenev wrote from Berlin: "Until my trip to Italy, the marble of statues was just marble, and I could never figure out the secret charm of painting. But, on the other hand, what bothered me in Rome was the condition of the people, and affected saintliness, a systematic enslavement and an absence of 'real' life... No! The Russian nation has far more hopes and is much stronger than the Italians, especially the Southerners."¹

Mikhail Bakunin turned up in Berlin as well, with the goal of studying the fundamentals of Hegelian philosophy, and the revolutionary quickly made Turgenev's acquaintance. The two moved into a single apartment, studied together and played chess, spending long hours engrossed in serious conversation and discussion.

And so the year passed. In the spring of 1841, having completed his studies, Turgenev began preparations for his trip home. By May he was already in Russia, where he soon passed his Master's exams

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1961, p. 189 (in Russian).

and began working for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In the autumn of 1843, the Italian opera company arrived in St. Petersburg, a scheduled stop on its tour. Travelling with the company was a young, 22-year-old singer named Pauline Viardot-García, a talented actress already well-known in the musical world. Charles Gounod and Franz Liszt, Mikhail Glinka and Anton Rubinstein had all sung her praises.

The Petersburg public was quickly enthralled by Viardot-García's artistic mastery, her charm and the range of her voice. And Turgenev was among those most impressed, not missing a single performance. His friends were all talking about how Turgenev had immersed himself in Italian opera and how completely he was captivated by Viardot-García.

During a hunting trip, Turgenev first made the acquaintance of Pauline's husband, Louis Viardot and then of the singer herself. All this took place on 1 November, a day which would subsequently remain fixed forever in Turgenev's memory. The long years could not dim the memory of that day...

In a letter to Pauline Viardot dated 13 November 1850, Turgenev wrote from Petersburg: "Hello my dearest, my beloved, hello today, a day which marks seven years since our friendship began. With God's help we will be able to spend our next anniversary together and I pray that our friendship will be as strong seven years from now.

"Today I visited that house where, seven years ago, I had the good fortune to first speak with you. The house is on Nevsky Prospekt, across from the Aleksandrinsky Theater; your apartment was in the corner — do you remember it? There are no memories which are more dear than those of you... I hope that these few lines will bring you some little enjoyment... And now, I ask that you let me fall on my knees at your feet..."¹

All this was seven years later. Meanwhile, let us return to St. Petersburg in the spring of 1845. The

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. I, p. 407 (in Russian).

Italian opera company had completed its tour and its members were preparing to leave Russia. Ivan Turgenev was also making preparations to go abroad, having left his post in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. On 10 May, the Petersburg governor-general received a special passport for Ivan Turgenev to go abroad, who, as it was written, was "journeying to Germany and Holland for medical treatment".

All the same, Turgenev wanted to go neither to Germany, nor to Holland, but to other lands... That summer Turgenev spent travelling through the south of France and then left for Paris, where he had an invitation from the Viardots to visit them at their estate of Courtavenel, 60 km from Paris.

And it was with great satisfaction that Turgenev accepted this invitation, of which he had only dreamed. Gradually Turgenev's attachment and profound passion for Pauline Viardot intensified. Her artistic gifts, her intellect and the spiritual wealth of her character continued to move Turgenev...

His letter to Pauline Viardot, 2 November 1846, from Petersburg: "Three days have passed since I arrived in Petersburg after more than five months in the country. Knowing that you are in Berlin, I had to give in to the desire to write to you. After having the good fortune to become close to you and your husband, I cannot get used to the idea that I will again become a stranger to you. I am writing to you in the hope that you haven't forgotten me entirely and that you will be pleased to receive this letter from a city where you were, and still are, so loved."¹

The year was 1847 and in the second half of January Turgenev left for Berlin. In Russia at that time the journal *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) had begun printing Turgenev's stories from his series *A Sportsman's Sketches*. In early 1848 he arrived in Paris and became an eyewitness to the revolution of 1848-1849.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

Even before this, Turgenev had studied the history of the French Revolution of 1789-94, and at the end of 1847, while in Paris, he developed a serious interest in the history of the French nation. As soon as the second volume of Jules Michelet's seven-volume *Histoire de la révolution française* (History of the French Revolution) appeared, Turgenev began reading it. It was with great interest that he learned about those events which had occurred in France: the beginning and further development of the Revolution of 1789, the flight of the king... In a letter to Viardot, Turgenev described his impressions: "The second volume of Michelet's *French Revolution* is an excellent work and one that is, thank God, not 'literary'. It comes straight from the heart, and is filled with blood and an inner fire; here is a man of the people turning to the people, a man of fine intellect and a noble heart. This second volume is much better than the first. Michelet's work is diametrically opposed to that of Louis Blanc."¹

Turgenev was also familiar with the works of Adolphe Thiers *Histoire de la révolution française* (History of the French Revolution) and *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* (History of the Consulate and the Empire).² The French Revolution itself and the accompanying revolutionary passion left an indelible mark on Turgenev.

But a new revolution was ripening in France: the revolution of 1848-49. Turgenev shared his first impressions of the coming crisis with Viardot; and even though these accounts are fragmentary and unsystematic, they do give some idea of the writer's attitude towards the revolutionary events.

On 15 January 1848, the French reactionary publicist and political activist Charles Montalembert

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. I, p. 445. By the time the letter was written, it is obvious that Turgenev was already familiar with Blanc's *Histoire de la révolution française* (History of the French Revolution) which had appeared in 1847.

² "Souvenirs sur Tourguéneff", in *Mercure de France*, Vol. 120, March-April 1917, p. 43.

gave a rather demagogic speech in the Chamber of Peers, in which he predicted that the radicalism which had triumphed in Switzerland, where the Catholics had suffered a defeat, would soon spread to France. His speech received the approval of the Chamber's right-wing members.

Turgenev to Pauline Viardot, 17 January 1848, from Paris: "For a few days Paris was agitated by Montalembert's fanatic and counter-revolutionary speech. The old peers warmly applauded his attacks on the Convention. This is just another symptom (and one of the most important) of the intellectual state of the country. The world is experiencing the pangs of labour and there are many who would like to see it suffer a miscarriage."¹

We have at our disposal Turgenev's direct accounts of the events of 1848 in Paris. The writer composed what he called a "precise account" of all that he saw in Paris on 15 May and sent it to Pauline. This account is of undoubted interest to us as well. On that day a demonstration had been planned by the inhabitants of Paris in front of the National Assembly and in support of the national liberation movement which was gathering strength in Poland.

"I came out of the house around noon," Turgenev writes. "The scene in the boulevards was nothing out of the ordinary, but on the Place de la Madeleine there were already 200-300 workers carrying banners." According to Turgenev's account, he then saw, in the "left corner" of the square, an elderly man standing on a chair and giving a speech in defence of Poland. His words brought claps of approval from the Parisians gathered around him. Turgenev settled himself on the steps of the Church of the Madeleine and continued his observations.

Soon there appeared a procession which moved along in rows of 16 persons deep, carrying a banner. It was headed towards the National Assembly. Cries of "Long live Poland" sounded from the procession. "Soon," writes Turgenev, "you could see how these

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. I, p. 456 (in Russian).

people in their workers' shirts quickly mounted the steps of the Assembly building. I heard that these were delegates who were then quickly admitted into the building."¹

Turgenev left the steps of the Church and moved further on... He came to the Place de la Concorde, filled with people; a man rushed by, shouting to all the passersby: "Friends, friends! The Assembly has been seized! We need your help! I am a representative of the people!" Only later did Turgenev learn that the popular attempt to seize the National Assembly and disperse its deputies proved a failure. What was his reaction to this? "The bourgeois order has triumphed and justifiably this time."² Such was his conclusion.

Yes, Turgenev was opposed to the popular uprising and the revolutionary protest; he even chided the National Assembly for "not raising its voice in protest and for wasting half an hour listening to the revolutionary Blanqui's expatiations". But, at the same time, Turgenev was opposed to the self-satisfied bourgeois as well, opposed to those who had "the look of fishermen who had just hauled in a full net".³

All the same, Turgenev was unable to fully understand what was happening and the aims and emotions of the people. "Honestly," he writes, "I was not in a position to try and guess what they wanted, what they feared; whether or not they were revolutionaries or reactionaries, or simply supporters of the existing order. It seemed they were waiting for the end of the storm. Meanwhile, I would often speak with the workers in shirts.... They were waiting for something, expecting something... What is history anyway? Is it Providence, chance, irony or fate?"⁴

These revolutionary events soon spilled over from France into Austro-Hungary. The Russian Tsar Nicholas I sent his own troops there to aid in the crushing of the national liberation movement.

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*. Vol. I, p. 462 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 464.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

Having learned of this, Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot on 10 June 1849: "To hell with all national sentiment! For any feeling individual, there is just one fatherland: democracy. And if the Russians are triumphant, it will be dealt a death blow."¹

The defeat of the revolution in Europe in 1848-49 prompted Turgenev to think about socio-economic problems, about Europe's past and the history of the social movement as well as about the role of the individual in a time of social upheaval. He was helped in all his musing by a two-volume work by a certain Jean Damas-Hinard, composed from original sources and entitled *Napoléon, ses opinions et jugements sur les hommes et sur les choses* (Napoleon: His Views and Opinions about People and Things) which was published in 1838.²

Having read this work, Turgenev wrote to share his opinions with Pauline Viardot in July of 1849: "What a great and powerful figure this Napoleon, what strength of character, what consistency and unity of will! And at the same time, never was there a man who belonged more to the past. He is the sum total of the past, and turns his back on the future... Monarchy was dying in Europe and he organised power and the government; government, that disgusting spectre which is powerless to do anything, an empty and stupid entity with the word *Order* on its lips and a sword in one hand and gold coins in the other, crushing us all with its iron boots."³

These events gave much food for thought, much that was worth thinking about again and again.

Upon returning to Russia after the events of 1848-49, Turgenev eagerly shared with his friends his impressions of all that he had seen and experienced during this stormy time. Let's take a look at some eyewitness accounts. Yevgeny Feoktistov, a bureaucrat and man of letters recalled that "in 1850, I met Ivan Turgenev for the first time at the home of Countess

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

² *Ibid.*, p. 612.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

Salias, to whom he had been introduced by Vasily Botkin. Turgenev had just returned from abroad where he had been a witness to the February Revolution and its subsequent events. You can imagine the interest his stories posed for those people who belonged to Granovsky's circle and for those people who took heartfelt sympathy for everything that was happening in France then and affecting all of Europe. And Turgenev could tell it all as no one else could."¹

These interesting stories by an eyewitness to historic events made a significant impression on another contemporary as well, a certain P. A. Vasilchikov, a bureaucrat in the local government body in the early 1850s and a frequent visitor to the literary-musical salon of Matvei Vigel'sky, where Turgenev often appeared. Vasilchikov's diary has survived the years and contains detailed notes of Turgenev's accounts of the events of the French Revolution.

The following is one of these entries: "The July Days' insurgents were fighting for the realisation of the vain dream. Many had already lost all hope and thought only of the chance of dying because they realised they had nothing to live for since they saw that those who had promised them their rights and wealth before 24 February [the date of the popular uprising.—*B. I.*] had broken their promises and had cruelly deceived them."²

Yes, this "cruel deceit" of the unfortunates roused Turgenev's indignation. He understood their aspirations to establish a just social order and he felt a certain sympathy for the working people.

This sympathy also appeared in his attitude towards the Italian people. It was with a great interest that Turgenev began to follow the events in Italy where a struggle to unite the country was developing. He was first and foremost drawn to the heroic figure of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the leader of the Italian revolutionary democracy. On 13 August 1859, Turgenev wrote to his friend Pavel Annenkov in Russia: "What

¹ Ye. M. Feoktistov, *Behind the Scenes in Politics and Literature, 1849—1896*, Leningrad, 1929, p. 1 (in Russian).

² *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 76, Moscow, 1967, p. 355 (in Russian).

a mess things are in Italy! Nothing but misfortune! I'm afraid that frustration will cause our brother, this born spectator, to do something stupid. You suddenly cry out 'Viva Garibaldi!' and in an instant you feel the lash on your back from all sides."¹

While a respect for Garibaldi could cause you considerable suffering in Russia, there was no such threat abroad. And Turgenev decided to make Garibaldi's acquaintance. To do so, he asked Herzen for help, and the latter gave Turgenev the necessary letter of introduction on 1 May 1861. In the letter Herzen referred to Garibaldi as a "grey-haired mischief-maker". What follows is the contents of this letter:

"Dear General,

"A friend of mine, one of our most famous writers, Ivan Turgenev, would like to have the honour of being introduced to you. He is on his way to Russia where the youth and, even more importantly, the young officers, adore you. What a great pity it is that Emperor Alexander has besmirched himself with blood. And things were going so well for us."²

Circumstances, however, prevented Turgenev from meeting Garibaldi in person. But events in Italy continued to occupy a central place in Turgenev's mind. On 27 August 1862, he wrote to Herzen from Baden-Baden: "What sort of person is Garibaldi after all? You follow, with an involuntary trembling, each movement of this, the *last* of our heroes. Could it be that Brutus, who not only in the course of history *always* perishes, but in Shakespeare as well, will triumph? You can't believe it, and your heart stands still."³

And it was at the end of August that Turgenev received the sad news that Garibaldi had been wounded and taken prisoner. With a heavy heart Turgenev shared this news with the Russian poet Afanasy Fet:

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. III, 1961, p. 334 (in Russian).

² A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works* in thirty volumes, Vol. XXVII, Book I, *Letters*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 150-51 (in Russian).

³ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. V, 1963, p. 40 (in Russian).

"The news has reached me of the sad end to Garibaldi's venture, and I could write no more. Even though I know very well that the role of honest people on this earth consists almost exclusively in dying an honourable death, and that Octavian, sooner or later, will overcome Brutus, I still took this news very hard." ¹

* * *

Even though he spent the majority of his time abroad, Turgenev never ceased thinking of his homeland, and the events taking place there. He received numerous letters from his readers, friends and acquaintances in Russia, read the Russian newspapers and journals and would often compare the situation in France with that in Russia. In a letter to Sergei Aksakov written in the autumn of 1856, Turgenev admits that "...my stay in France has affected me in the usual way: everything that I see and hear pushes me closer and closer to Russia, and everything native becomes all the more dear". ²

During his stay at the family estate of Spasskoye in September of 1858, Turgenev read the last issues of the journal *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) and was prompted to write to the journal's editor, the poet-democrat Nikolai Nekrasov: "Chernyshevsky has written an excellent article about the party clashes in France. Send him my best regards." ³

Meanwhile, Russia was preparing for reform: the abolition of serfdom. Turgenev was in Paris at that time, but all his thoughts were with his homeland. From his friends' letters and Russian publicistic writings, Turgenev learned about the uprising in social activities in the country and that the serfs would soon be freed. "All my thoughts are with Russia," he wrote to Herzen in London.

The Manifesto on the abolition of serfdom was made public and the question was now: how would the

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*. Vol. V., p. 44 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

serfs themselves accept it? Telegrams bear witness to the absolute calm and quiet of the situation. But what will happen next, Turgenev asked Herzen.

In a Paris church a service was said for the freeing of the peasants and those in attendance included Ivan Turgenev, members of the 14 December 1825 uprising Nikolai Turgenev and Prince Sergei Volkonsky, and others. They all shook hands, congratulating themselves on the occasion and praised Tsar Alexander II.

But in Russia, things were not as happy as they seemed in the beginning. Rumours were soon heard that the peasants were agitated: it was not that kind of freedom they had expected. Turgenev soon arrived in Russia and saw all this for himself...

On 3 June 1861, Turgenev wrote from his estate in Spasskoye to his friend Vasily Botkin: "The peasants are not only refusing the redemption fees [i. e., they didn't want to pay off/buy their freedom.—*B. I.*], but they don't understand it either... Things are quiet here, and if something does flare up, the conciliatory and cooling effect of the rod is wonderful."¹

While living in Western Europe, Turgenev always used every available opportunity to return to Russia where he collected material for his writing. His works reflected Russian life, the daily existence and morals of the Russian people, and ideological clashes in Russian society. But, in spite of this, he felt certain alienation from his homeland which had an effect on his works. He once confessed in all sincerity to his close friend, M. A. Milyutina: "I am prepared to admit that the talent bestowed upon me by nature has not diminished; but I can't do *anything* with it... I still have a voice, but no songs to *sing*, so it is better for me to be silent. There are *no songs* because I'm living outside of Russia; and I can't help living outside of Russia because I am helpless in the face of certain all-powerful conditions."²

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, 1962, p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, 1965, p. 91.

It seems that Turgenev slightly overdramatised the situation — he still continued to write, his works still continued to be published in Russia and many of them were immediately translated in Western Europe.

Let us return to the situation abroad. The events there were, for Turgenev, anything but calm. Whatever you might think, Turgenev's personal life was rather strange and unsettled. His attraction to Pauline Viardot had turned into a lasting love and he could not imagine life without her. But what would the future bring?...

And there were his ideological differences with his Russian friends to consider...

* * *

In the beginning of the 1860s, Turgenev and Herzen had a disagreement: Herzen chided Turgenev for his alienation from Russian reality, and for the fact that his interests lay in Western Europe. Herzen wrote rather irritably to Turgenev: "In Russia, which is so bereft of people, it is sad and disgusting to see how noble and pure individuals are leaving the country."¹

But it would seem that this was not the only reason for the break. Actually, it was rooted in the fact that the revolutionary Herzen and the liberal Turgenev differed in their opinions on the role of the people in a social reconstruction of society. Turgenev expressed all of this very clearly in a letter to one of his Russian acquaintances in the autumn of 1862: "My major disagreement with Ogarev and Herzen, and with Bakunin as well," wrote Turgenev, "is that they, disdaining the educated class in Russia, and almost trampling it in the mud, see the sources for revolution and reform in the people. It's not that way at all, but rather the opposite. Revolution, in the true and vital, and I might even add, in the broadest sense of the word, exists *only* in that minority, in the educated class. And that is enough for

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, in thirty volumes, Vol. XXVII, Book 1, p. 149 (in Russian).

its triumph, if only we will not destroy ourselves.”¹

At the same time, Turgenev was writing to Herzen that the role of the educated class in Russia was that of “transmitting civilisation to the people”. The people themselves must then decide what to do further: accept or reject the advice of the educated class.

According to Turgenev, Herzen and those who shared his opinions were deluded and were acting the opposite way, thinking that the people themselves would “create their own life”. Turgenev ended his letter to Herzen with the reproach that Herzen “was renouncing revolution because the people, to whom you pay homage, are conservatives par excellence, and they even carry the germ of the bourgeoisie in their sheepskin coats...”²

But that is still not the whole story. There were other reasons for disagreements.

Turgenev was obviously displeased by the tendencies visible in the articles in *The Bell*. In conjunction with this, he expressed his objections to Herzen in a letter dated 4 November 1862: “I am beginning to think that, in that oft-repeated antithesis, the West, so beautiful on the outside, but so rotten on the inside, and the East, so rotten on the outside, yet so beautiful on the inside, there is a certain hypocrisy which even the most intelligent minds still cling to.”³

Further, Turgenev was bothered by the fact that Herzen, who professed to be an enemy of mysticism and absolutism, “mystically pays homage to the Russian sheepskin coat”, and sees in it “a sublime grace” and the novelty of future social relationships. Turgenev wrote to Herzen: “I am not a nihilist simply because I see, as far as my understanding will allow, the tragedy in the fate of the whole *European* family (including, of course, Russia).”⁴

Meanwhile, these contacts between Turgenev and Herzen had attracted the attention of the tsarist government. The Third Section demanded that Turgenev re-

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. V, p. 49 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 73.

turn to Russia to testify. Turgenev responded with a letter to Tsar Alexander II that the points in question be sent in written form to Paris, and his request was granted. The questions posed by the Judicial Commission of Enquiry were dispatched to Paris. Turgenev informed Herzen of all this in a letter dated 12 February 1863.

On 3 April 1863, Turgenev answered the questions. He explained that he knew Herzen, Ogarev and Bakunin, that he knew Herzen particularly well and had certain "friendly relations" with him. Turgenev admitted that he knew as well that Herzen was "acting against the government", but in spite of this he continued to maintain these friendly contacts which went as far back as the 1840s. "The then younger generation," Turgenev went on to say, "to which Herzen and I and many others, both dead and alive now, belonged, had certain interests in common, were striving for one and the same goals."¹ And all of this was in Russia.

Let's take a look at some of his other answers. In 1848 Turgenev had met Herzen in Paris: "Europe, as it was at that time, made a powerful impression on me," Turgenev wrote, "but, in spite of that, I still remained just a spectator, watching the rising storm. And Herzen himself seemed to be doing nothing as well. No one was ever talking about propaganda or having an effect on the Russian public. First, we had to understand where history was headed and what it wanted."

Herzen then began to publish his anti-government newspaper, *The Bell*, abroad, and it was this that gradually lead the Russian emigrant to "a complete break with all his former friends".²

Turgenev answered the many other and varied questions, but the tsarist gendarmes could find nothing of a criminal nature in any of his answers.

Meanwhile, by the middle of 1863, Turgenev's relationship with Herzen had come to an end. In July, Turgenev informed Herzen that he was ending their corre-

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 392-93 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 393.

spondence due to a complete difference of opinions, and "why should we go on fruitlessly mocking each other?"

At that critical moment, *The Bell* (15 January 1864) published a letter which referred to a "certain grey-haired Magdalene (of the male gender) who wrote to the tsar that she had lost her appetite and couldn't sleep, that she had no peace, no hair or teeth and that she was tormented by the thought that the tsar still didn't know that she had repented and 'had broken her ties with the friends of her youth' ".¹

Turgenev immediately understood to whom this was referring. And in a letter to Herzen dated 22 July 1864, Turgenev writes: "For a long time after returning from Russia I debated whether or not to write to you about the article in *Kolokol* [The Bell] about the 'grey-haired male Magdalene whose repentance caused her hair and teeth to fall out'. Realising that the article clearly referred to me, I was deeply distressed... I ask you not to cause me any new unpleasantness."²

Not only did Herzen not cause Turgenev any "new unpleasantness", but he even made an attempt at reconciliation. At the end of 1867 he sent Turgenev a copy of the first issue of the new, French edition of *The Bell*. Turgenev immediately offered his thanks for this act of friendship, but could not refrain from voicing his criticism of an article by Herzen contained therein: "...but this is, after all, an old point of contention between us; in my opinion, neither is Europe so old, nor is Russia so young as you might imagine; we are all in the same boat, and no 'special word' is expected from us."³

Thus it was that the correspondence was renewed, but the arguments and disagreements continued, each of the opponents standing firm on his understanding of the historical paths of Western Europe and Russia.

Turgenev to Herzen, 25 December 1867, from Baden-Baden:

¹ A. I. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, 1959, p. 35 (in Russian).

² I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 241-42 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, 1963, pp. 354-55.

"Otherwise you'll end up like Ivan Sergeyevich Aksakov and recommend that Europe should look to Orthodoxy for complete recovery. A belief in the people is in its own way a belief in God, a religion, and you are an inconsistent Slavophil."

But, further on the tone is decidedly more friendly:

"...We both wonder to ourselves why it is that the other *doesn't see* what seems to be perfectly obvious! But this doesn't prevent me, at least, from sincerely loving you and warmly shaking your hand."¹

...The year is 1870 and a seriously ill Herzen is living in Paris. His daughter Natalya is caring for him.

Turgenev to Herzen, 17 January 1870, from Paris:

"My dear Natalya Alexandrovna, please pardon me, but how is your father today, and how did he sleep last night? I will come to see you about 4 o'clock today."²

Turgenev was in Baden-Baden at the time of Herzen's death. Upon hearing the news he immediately wrote to Pavel Annenkov on 22 January 1870: "I am writing to you under the influence of grievous news, dear Annenkov. Just an hour ago I learned that Herzen had died and I couldn't hold back my tears.

"No matter what the differences might have been in our opinions, or what kind of clashes occurred between us, it's all the same: an old comrade and friend is gone; our ranks are thinning, thinning."³

* * *

Herzen's death coincided with a major event in Western Europe: the Franco-Prussian War and with still another revolution in France: the Paris Commune.

The French Emperor Napoleon III, in an effort to find a way out of the revolutionary crisis in his country, declared war on 19 July 1870. This action was also in answer to the defiant actions of the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who was attempting to unite all the

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VI, pp. 354-55 (in Russian).

² I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VIII, 1964, p. 166 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

German states. But the French army was ill-prepared for such a confrontation and Turgenev was witness to their defeat.

From Baden-Baden he journeyed by carriage to the castle of Iburg which stood on one of the heights (facing the Rhine) of the Schwarzwald. Just minutes before Turgenev's arrival, cannon-fire in the area ceased. From the castle the Alsace Valley was visible and it was clear that the French had been defeated and were retreating. Upon returning to Baden-Baden the next day, Turgenev learned of the details of the battle: the troops under General MacMahon had suffered a serious defeat. Turgenev was seized with a complex of emotions: on the one hand, he wanted an end to the Napoleonic Empire, but on the other, he was deeply upset by the defeat of the French nation.

Turgenev distinctly expressed his moods in a letter to Annenkov dated 8 August 1870. He wrote that no one expected such a turn of events. The fall of the Napoleonic Empire opened the door for the "salvation of civilisation" and for Europe's free development. But all of this meant a long and sustained struggle... "And suddenly!" "I'm not joking," wrote Turgenev, "I sincerely love and respect the French nation. I recognise its magnificent and glorious role in the past and I have no doubt as to its significance in the future; many of my best and closest friends are French. And you certainly can't suspect me of a deliberate and unjust hatred for their homeland. But it is hardly their turn to learn a lesson like the one the Prussians learned at Jena, or the Austrians at Sadowa and, why hide the truth, like we learned at Sevastopol. God grant that they will learn from this, will gather a sweet fruit from a bitter root! It's time, it's long past time for them to take a close look at themselves, to look inside their country, to see their ulcers and to try to heal them. It's time to put an end to this immoral fact which has lorded over them for almost 20 years now..."¹

Meanwhile, Paris was causing considerable alarm. How would the capital react to such a humiliating

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VIII, p. 263 (in Russian).

defeat? And, all of this after "a lot of fanfare" and numerous threats directed towards the enemy from the pages of the French newspapers. "Only time will tell," was how Turgenev ended his letter.¹

Less than two weeks after the French army under General Basen in Metz had been surrounded, Turgenev predicted the fate of Paris: "It is entirely possible that a revolution will flare up in Paris, if it hasn't already... Napoleon will barely hold out."² *Sankt-Peterburgskiy vedomosti* (St. Petersburg Gazette): "What is going on in Paris? The newspapers have probably already informed you of the disturbance there... But what will come later, when the truth will be more fully revealed to the French? The immoral government ended by bringing foreigners into the confines of the homeland, having ravaged the country, destroyed the army and, having deeply wounded the well-being, freedom and dignity of France now deals a death blow to her pride. Could it possibly be that this government will survive, that it will not be swept away by the storm?"³

In his subsequent letters, Turgenev painted a picture for his Russian readers of the growing popular anger. France, "insulted and offended to the very depths of her soul", demanded a decisive battle with the Prussians. Turgenev noted that the patriotism and enthusiasm of the French people would allow them to fight selflessly, even though the "odds were with the Germans". He was troubled by the fact that the French were not said truthfully about the war, about the threat which hung over the country.⁴

Of course, the declaration of a republic in France came as no surprise to Turgenev. He considered it a step absolutely justifiable and natural: after the surrender at Sedan, the French could not remain indifferent to the existing regime — "the Napoleonic

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VIII, p. 264. (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 268 (Letter to M. A. Milyutina, 20 August 1870, from Baden-Baden).

³ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. II, p. 362 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

dynasty has cut its own throat". But, once having abandoned the government of the empire, it was then necessary to choose a new form of government. "What other form could they have chosen, except that of a republic?"¹ Turgenev wrote.

So, the empire collapsed and a republic arose in its place. And Turgenev's attitude towards France's adversary changed: "Now the Germans are the aggressors, and I am not particularly drawn to aggressors." The Prussian king could not "swallow" the Republic. Turgenev indignantly reacted to the widespread rumours that "King Wilhelm was intending to restore Napoleon to the throne once he had taken Paris". If this should happen, that France would agree to take back the Bonaparte from the hands of the enemy, then the whole country should be tossed out of the mind of "every decent individual".²

In any case, Germany's attitude towards the declaration of a republic in France was of extreme interest to Turgenev. He noted, most importantly, that this time the restoration of the Republic did not arouse "even a shadow of that sympathy" which greeted the Republic of 1848.

The Germans, on their part, believed that the Republic would get no popular support and therefore would not last long. This kind of uncertainty complicated a peace agreement and forced Germany to take certain measures for the "immediate seizure of Paris". Then ... peace, the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine... The latter seemed unjust to Turgenev: it would have been "worthy" of the victorious Germans to refuse that seizure. And what about France? "France's future is now in the hands of the Parisians." Even though Turgenev felt a certain sympathy for the Germans, he still wished that they would be defeated at Paris: "If they can't take Paris, they won't succumb to the temptation of attempting to restore the imperial regime, something which a few overly zealous and patriotic newspapers have already written. They won't

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 277-78 (Letter to Annenkov, 15 September 1870, from Baden-Baden).

² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

spoil their own achievements and they won't cause France the bloodiest injury which any defeated nation has ever been forced to suffer." ¹

In a final letter written in Baden-Baden on 30 September, Turgenev claimed that the struggle was not yet over and that the people's fury and their "desperate determination to fight to the finish" could save France. Turgenev writes of a discussion with a Frenchman from Dijon who is full of optimism. The latter believes that if Paris can hold out for 3-4 months, and if the French can show some determination, and even if the fall of Paris will not "confuse the nation", then "all is not yet lost". Even more so, since the opposing army will "melt like wax" and the French reserves are "inexhaustible". ²

It follows then that Turgenev accepted the Republic in France extremely favourably. But further revolutionary developments and an upsurge in the social struggle across the country put him on his guard. All of this went against the grain of his liberal views. More and more actively the popular masses began to participate in the movement and this revolutionary bent on the part of the people frightened him. "The situation in France," he wrote in December, "is taking such a turn, that next year all of Europe will be on fire. And then what will happen with civilisation and freedom?" ³

And, in fact, all of Europe was "on fire" the next year. On 18 March 1871, the Commune was declared in Paris, the first proletarian revolution had occurred.

Turgenev was in Russia when the Commune was declared, and was witness to the reactions of various Russian social groups to these events in France. He wrote in detail to Pauline Viardot about his impressions, noting how the Russian imperial capital sympathised with France and "was quite set against Germany". However, it was true that here they were "a little troubled"

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. II, p. 373 (Report published in *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* (St. Petersburg Gazette), 26 September 1870, No. 265).

² *Ibid.*, p. 376.

³ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VIII, pp. 316-17 (in Russian). (Letter to M. A. Milyutina, 14 December 1870, from London).

by the fact that the French had shown themselves to be so "lacking" in talent, and this had, in turn, raised some concern for the future of their country. All the same, according to Turgenev, even the highest echelons continued to hope for the success of a "moderate republic" and expressed their satisfaction with the policies of Thiers, whose visit to St. Petersburg had made such a favourable impression.¹

The public at large was especially well disposed towards a republican France. On the morning of 27 February 1871, a literary-musical benefit was held in the Artists' Club to aid the French wounded, and Turgenev was among those in attendance. Each time *La Marseillaise* sounded in the hall, or poetry dedicated to the Republic was read, a "burst of tempestuous applause" rang out, accompanied by "shouts of 'Long live France!'"²

In St. Petersburg, Turgenev impatiently awaited the latest news: what was happening in Paris? This is what was uppermost in his mind at that time. Having learned of the revolution of 18 March, Turgenev wrote from Moscow to Pauline Viardot of his first impressions: "I have seen those awful latest telegrams from Paris, informing of the triumph of the Montmartre insurgents! My poor, unfortunate France! What an abyss she has fallen into, and how will she find her way out of it!..."³

Subsequently Turgenev fell into despair on reading the accounts and evaluations of the events in the official press. And his own musings on the stormy revolutionary outburst of 18 March were equally discouraging. This mood was reflected in a letter to Pauline Viardot: "My dear, beloved, Madame Viardot. I cannot help telling you how this terrible news from Paris has completely engulfed me, and how it has plunged me into despair. It is just like imperial, praetorian Rome, which was perishing from anarchy,

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 17 (Letter to Pauline Viardot, 25 February 1871, from St. Petersburg).

² *Ibid.*, p. 369. See *Sankt-Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* (St. Petersburg Gazette), 13 March 1871, No. 60 (in Russian).

³ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. IX, p. 43 (in Russian).

and Horace's cry of *Quo, quo, sclesti ruitis?* rings continuously in my ears.

"The latest events are particularly lamentable in that they forcibly destroy that sympathy which had been experienced in Europe in regard to France (at the moment I see only that around me), and they play directly into the hands of the enemies of freedom. 'You see,' they cry, 'see what these renowned principles of 1789 have led to!', and so forth and so on. This is the triumph of the June uprising of 1848, and what will happen to France? Could it be that that nation, whom we so loved and to whom we owed so much, is destined to suffer the fate of Poland or Mexico...?"¹

Turgenev also closely followed the events in Paris from London, and it seemed as if he had begun to more calmly react to the situation. In April, he suggested that "the Commune will triumph" because of Paris' serious outrage "in all its emotions, vanity, etc". Like other liberals, Turgenev saw the Commune as a battle between Paris and the provinces.² And so he did not condone the actions of the Communards, and would have liked to have seen the restoration of the bourgeois republic. "Yesterday evening we received word that the government troops had finally entered Paris," Turgenev notes with a certain amount of relief.³

While coming out against the Paris Commune Turgenev was at the same time troubled by the bloody reprisals against the Communards. Reactionary policy had triumphed and the Commune was drowning in blood. The centre of French political life then shifted to the National Assembly. Turgenev managed to keep an eye on further developments even from Baden-Baden. He was indignant at the fact that the National Assembly was busy debating about parties, forms of government, but had completely forgotten the main question: "The disgrace of a foreign invasion should be their constant concern day and night and should burn

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. IX, p. 50. (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69 (Letter to I. I. Maslov from London dated 14 April 1871).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

in their hearts and souls like the touch of red-hot iron at their heels..."¹

Turgenev arrived in Paris on 24 November 1871 where the government still had not been able to restore order. It was difficult to say just how stable was the Republic's position. The Republic, according to Turgenev, "was quite sick and wheezy", and could hardly be expected to last long. There were no strong individuals in the government, "Thiers turned out to be nothing more than a milksop and an old conservative, as he always had been."²

A year later, with a certain amount of satisfaction, Turgenev informed his friend, S. K. Kavelina: "The Republic here has been secured; there's no doubt about that, and that's enough for now."³

Many times, in his letters to friends, Turgenev wrote that he was not interested in the political affairs occurring in Western Europe. But, in reality, he was unable to isolate himself from the political situation in France after the Paris Commune. He kept a close eye on the growing republican sentiment of the public at large throughout the country, but all the same he noted that in the higher administrative levels there was more of a monarchic, Bonapartist element. He saw that there were no reforms being introduced, and that in this way things could eventually lead to the re-institution of the Empire. True, the Republic existed formally, but what was the nature of this Republic?

Turgenev to Pavel Annenkov, 2 December 1873, from Paris:

"We are moving towards the most stalwart, awful, vulgar, narrow, wooden and iron republic! And the republic remains, a kind that even the late Nikolai Pavlovich [Russian Tsar Nicholas I — *B. I.*] would have approved of. A smart, military, uniformed republic."⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 389-90 (Letter to Pierre-Jules Hetzel, 29 August 1871).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 343 (Letters to Afanasy Fet, 6 December 1871 and Vladimir Stasov, 10 December 1871).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁴ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. X, 1965, p. 171 (in Russian).

But things continued to take their own course. MacMahon was elected President of the Republic in 1873. He suppressed the Paris Commune and dealt harshly with the Communards. This kind of president was not at all to Turgenev's liking and he wrote to Gustave Flaubert in the summer of 1874: "You now have a wonderful and infamous sabre, a gendarme's sword which will hang over you for seven years. You'll see that things will end in such a way so that it will remain your sole ruler, without chambers."¹

Turgenev's sympathies were more directed towards Léon Gambetta, the leader of the Republican Party. When the Republicans prevailed over the Bonapartists in the elections of 20 February 1876, Turgenev felt that credit for the victory belonged in large part to Gambetta. And this Republican victory opened new doors for favourable developments in France.

"There is no doubt," Turgenev wrote to the well-known Russian writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin, "that a great change has occurred, and the road, along which we were travelling, has changed... It's been a long time since I was able to look so optimistically ahead, and I still have more faith in France than in Russia, where with each passing day a certain disgusting swamp spreads further and further."²

* * *

His long stay in Western Europe, the numerous translations of his works and his contacts in the society of the leading representatives of French, German and English literature gradually turned Turgenev into an active representative of the leading edge of Russian affairs abroad, where he enjoyed a great popularity and was something of an intermediary between Russian and Western European literatures.

The literary critic Georg Brandes was a witness to the fact that "no earlier Russian author has been read in Europe like Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev... He opened

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*. Vol. X, p. 444 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, 1966, pp. 216-17.

up to the European public a new world of subjects... He has peopled the great empire of the East with human beings of the present time."¹

Not only did Turgenev use his own works to reveal Russia to the Western European reading public, but he widely propagandised all of Russian literature and attempted to introduce leading Western society to the works of the best Russian writers. At his initiative Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Nikolai Gogol, Lev Tolstoy and Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin were translated into French and English. And in this way Western Europe learned about the life of the Russian people, their character and aims.

By the mid-1850s Turgenev's name had become so well known throughout France that he was offered to translate his own works into French. Other writers and men of letters were constantly trying to make his acquaintance and start up friendly relations with him.

During the summer of 1857 which he spent in London, Turgenev made, as he later wrote to Annenkov, "a number of pleasant acquaintances". These were the writers Thomas Carlyle and William Thackeray, the historian Thomas Macaulay, and the statesman and writer Benjamin Disraeli.

Turgenev was particularly close friends with Gustave Flaubert. The two met in the beginning of 1863 and quickly became friends. Turgenev had a very high opinion of *Madame Bovary*, considering the novel to be the best work of all the new French literature. He himself sent Flaubert a collection of his novellas and stories published in French under the title of *Scènes de la vie russe* (Pictures of Russian Life).

And Flaubert immediately responded by saying: "While reading your *Pictures of Russian Life* I feel as if I'm bumping along in a cart over the snowy expanses, listening to the howl of the wolves. Your works give off a sharp, yet delicate aroma, a captivating sadness which penetrates to the depth of the soul. You are a

¹ Georg Brandes, *Impressions of Russia*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1966, pp. 213, 214.

master of your art! What a combination of emotion, irony, observation and colours!..."¹

Not only did the two correspond, but met as often as circumstances would allow. Turgenev often visited Flaubert at the latter's estate of Croisset near Rouen. They were in constant need of each other's company.

Turgenev to Flaubert, 26 May 1868, from Baden-Baden:

"There are very few people, especially among the French, with whom I can feel so at ease, and at the same time find their company so interesting, as I can with you; I think I could talk with you for weeks on end; you and I are like two moles who are digging their tunnels in the same direction."²

Thanks to Flaubert, Turgenev made the acquaintance of Emile Zola, Alphonse Daudet and Guy de Maupassant. These writers, together with Turgenev and Flaubert, made up the "circle of five". In the 1870s they would meet on Sundays for dinner, sitting down to the table around 7 o'clock in the evening and not getting up until well after 2 o'clock in the morning. They discussed new books, literary problems, talking openly and without exchanging mutual compliments, expressing their opinions honestly about one or another of their works, be it Flaubert's or Turgenev's.

Turgenev took great pains to ensure that Flaubert's works would be known not only in France, but in other countries as well. And to do this he had recourse to his numerous international contacts.

Turgenev to Heinrich Laube, 2 April 1874, from Paris:

"You have undoubtedly already received the book I sent you entitled *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, and are wondering, what does this mean? I will solve the riddle for you now.

"The author of this marvellous book is my old friend, Gustave Flaubert. He would like his book to be reviewed in Germany by competent and authoritative

¹ N. Bogoslovsky, *Turgenev*, Moscow, 1964, p. 384 (in Russian).

² I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. VII, 1964, p. 139 (in Russian).

critics, and I would like to help him do just that.”¹

Because he was something of an expert on Western European culture, Turgenev was engaged in an attempt to familiarise Russian society with it. He was searching for a way to publish reviews of leading Western European works in Russia.

As soon as *The Songs of the Russian People* by William Ralston, a leading English literary historian, appeared, Turgenev turned to the famous Russian art critic, Vladimir Stasov, with a request to respond to it. Turgenev wrote that the work was a very conscientious one, based on a broad spectrum of sources and that “Russians should encourage, in any way possible”, more such works. “There has never been a work like this in any European language,” Turgenev continued, “and Ralston has earned a pat on the back from a competent judge such as yourself. He will thank you for it, and so will your humble servant. I suggest that a small article in *Vestnik Jevropy* [European Messenger] will be just the thing. On my part I’ll write to Stasyulevich, the editor.”²

...It turned out that the leading Russian liberal journal, *The European Messenger*, had lost its permanent correspondent in England in early 1880. Mikhail Stasyulevich, the journal’s editor-in-chief, wrote to Turgenev for help in finding a replacement.

On 18 October, Turgenev wrote to the English publicist Edward Beesly, asking if he would agree to become the correspondent for a Russian journal. Beesly found the invitation interesting, and asked for details: what was the profile of the journal and what was the nature of the correspondence expected from him? Turgenev answered without delay: “Let nothing hinder you in your choice of subjects or style of expression. What is *particularly* expected from you is assessments of the policies of *Parliament*, of social, agrarian and religious issues; you will be concerned with litera-

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works, Letters*, Vol. X, p. 430 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 321.

ry and scientific subjects only when they have significance for the political questions.”¹

Turgenev's actions as an intermediary were expressed in other forms as well, an example of which follows. Until 1872 the French literary critic and translator Emile Durand had been teaching French in the St. Petersburg Law School. Then, having returned to France, he began to work in various periodicals, translating Turgenev's works.

In 1877 Durand received an assignment from the editorship of *Revue des Deux Mondes* to put together a biographic and literary-critical monograph on the leading representatives of Russian letters. In order to do this, Durand needed to travel to Russia for meetings with various writers and Turgenev's help was needed.

On 9 April Turgenev wrote to Fyodor Dostoyevsky about Durand's journey to Russia and asked for his help: “You, of course, are first in line in these terms [referring to the planned work.—*B. I.*], and Durand has asked me for a letter of introduction to you, a request which I will fulfil with great pleasure. I do so as I know that a personal acquaintance with M. Durand as with a highly conscientious, educated and intelligent individual, can only give you great satisfaction.”²

Turgenev wrote to two other writers: Alexander Ostrovsky and Alexei Pisemsky with similar requests.

Meanwhile, time was passing. Turgenev himself was growing older and many of his friends had already passed from the stage of life. And on 8 May 1880, Flaubert died. On the initiative of his many admirers money was collected for a monument to the writer in Rouen. A committee under the direction of Victor Hugo was formed to oversee the enterprise. Turgenev was chosen to share the post of vice-president together with the French artist Louis-Emile Lapierre. The former took upon himself all the organisational work and even offered his apartment for the committee's first meeting.

¹ I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. XIII, Book I, Leningrad, 1968, p. 344.

² I. S. Turgenev, *Collected Works. Letters*, Vol. XII, Book I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1966, p. 129 (in Russian).

At Turgenev's initiative, money was collected not only in Western Europe, but in Russia as well.

Turgenev to Petr Boborykin, 23 November 1880, from Paris:

"Perhaps you have heard that plans are under way here for a monument to Flaubert and a committee has been formed with Hugo as the president and me as the vice-president. In a few days we'll publish an announcement asking for donations. Could you possibly help on your side by bringing this to the attention of the Russian public, amongst whom Flaubert had many admirers."¹

* * *

While in London, the well-known revolutionary, the emigrant Petr Lavrov received an alarming letter from Turgenev informing him of his serious illness. Upon returning to Paris, Lavrov learned that Turgenev was being taken to Bougival, where Lavrov then visited the ailing writer on a number of occasions. At the end of the summer of 1882, Turgenev read his guest his "poems in prose": *The Conversation*, *Blue-collar and White-collar* and *The Threshold*. Turgenev returned to Paris on 18 November, but his health continued to decline and soon he was unable to write. On 24 March 1883, he dictated his daughter Pauline Bruère a few lines to Lavrov: "I am happy to hear of Lopatin's safe return and I hope to see him soon, but in my condition that won't be possible for another 5 or 6 days. When I can, I'll let you know." Turgenev wanted very much to see the famous Russian revolutionary, Hermann Lopatin, and the meeting soon took place, but under difficult circumstances. In Bougival, Lopatin was met by Pauline Viardot who was far from polite and did not want to admit him, claiming that the patient's condition would not permit a meeting. She finally relented and it turned out that the time for such a meeting was really most inappropriate. Turgenev was wracked with pain and had just been given a morphine injection to put him to sleep. Upon seeing Lopatin, he smiled and said: "I can't talk right now,

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, Book I, p. 7.

but I must see you again and have a talk with you." Unfortunately, that was not to be as Turgenev died on 3 September (22 August) 1883.

The funeral service took place in a small Russian church on the Rue Daru. Around 10 o'clock in the morning people had already begun to gather at the church and at 11 o'clock a delegation from the Russian Embassy arrived, headed by Prince Nikolai Orlov, in tails and covered with medals. A funereal silence hung in the air... And in came a delegation of emigrants, among whom was Lavrov. On the coffin they placed a large wreath bearing the inscription, in both Russian and French: "To Ivan Turgenev from the Russian emigrants of Paris".

On his deathbed in Bougival and so far from his homeland, Turgenev requested that he be buried in St. Petersburg, in the Volkov Cemetery. On 6 September, the Minister of Internal Affairs in Russia received a petition from Pauline Viardot for permission to bring the body of the deceased to St. Petersburg for burial in the Volkov Cemetery. On 7 September the request was granted...

From the church Turgenev's body was transferred to the Northern Railway Station (Gare du Nord) in Paris where a small funeral chapel was constructed (*Chepelle ardente*) with a solemn look. Friends and admirers of the deceased were admitted by ticket and orators spoke from a podium which had been covered in coarse black cloth and trimmed with silver braid.

The first to speak was the well-known French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan: "We could not let this coffin pass without a word in parting. It is taking our dear guest back to his homeland, a guest we so loved and had come to know over many, many years." And: "Honour and glory to the great Slavic nation whose appearance on history's stage is one of the most remarkable phenomena of our age; honour and glory to this nation which so early found a voice in this matchless artist."¹

¹ I. Tourguéneff, *Oeuvres dernières*, J. Hetzel et Cie éditeurs, Paris, s. a., pp. 297, 299.

The novelist Edmond About then said that France "would have proudly adopted you if you had wanted it, but you remained true to Russia and behaved nobly; because he who does not love his homeland completely, blindly, will always remain only half a man."¹

...Many who had visited Turgenev in the final years of his life felt that he was neglected by Pauline Viardot and that he felt himself to be abandoned and alone. After his death, these attacks on Viardot increased. How the actress herself reacted to this can be seen in a letter to the artist Alexei Bogolyubov:

"What right do these so-called friends of Turgenev have to insult me, and him, in regard to our relationship? All people are born free to choose and all of their actions, those which do not cause any harm to society, are above any sort of judgement! Both my and his emotions, feelings and actions were based on laws which we had adopted, laws which the masses did not understand, and not only the masses, but many people who otherwise consider themselves intelligent and honest. I spent 42 years with the chosen of my heart, harming, perhaps, myself, but no one else. But we knew each other too well to have had to worry about any harm, about what people were saying about us; the reciprocity of our position was recognised as legal by those who knew us and loved us. If the Russian people hold the name of Turgenev dear to their hearts, then they can proudly say that placing the name of Pauline Viardot next to his in no way belittles it."²

On 19 September Turgenev's body was sent from Paris and on 27 September, a funeral service was held in St. Petersburg. The huge procession accompanying the coffin set off for the Volkov Cemetery...

Turgenev's death was met with a broad spectrum of response in the Russian and foreign press. On 25 August 1883, the liberal newspaper *Russkiye vedomosti* (The Russian Gazette) wrote: "The name of Turgenev belongs not only to Russia; he is immensely

¹ *Foreign Criticism about Turgenev*, St. Petersburg, 1884, p. 7 (in Russian).

² *Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev Remembered by His Contemporaries*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1969, p. 33 (in Russian).

popular throughout the whole of the civilised world. Many of his stories have been translated into nearly all European languages and their worth has been noted by the leading European critics. All contemporary writers learn their craft by studying his works; they are offered as examples by the most talented writers in Europe..."

On 28 August, the same paper announced that "Turgenev was our Saviour, a reassuring beacon which spread light, truth and good all around, and his death may be compared, in the strength of its shock, only to the deaths of Garibaldi in Italy, David Strauss in Germany and the future death of Victor Hugo in France."¹

The following is taken from the German press at that time: "Turgenev's works are as popular in Germany as the works of our own great writers Schiller and Goethe," wrote the newspaper *Berliner Börsen-Courier*. "Every educated German has read *Fathers and Sons*, *Smoke*, *Virgin Soil* and other of Turgenev's works."²

Turgenev was not only popular in Western Europe and he was famous not only because his works were translated and read abroad. His cultural mission was significantly broader and more varied: he attempted to introduce the foreign reader to the spiritual world of the Russian people, to their life, interests and moods. All this was but one aspect of his activity; there were others of no less importance. Turgenev considered that the whole of Western Europe's intellectual life should not by-pass his homeland and Russia's leading minds, those who were striving to understand the various aspects of the social struggle and the ideological movement of their neighbours both near and far.

¹ *Literary Heritage*, Vol. 76, 1976, p. 637 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 691.

SERGEI STEPNIAK-KRAVCHINSKY, THE KNIGHT OF FREEDOM

The Traveller Arrives in Milan

One day in September 1881 a traveller calling himself Signor Nicola Fetter arrived, on foot, in Milan from Geneva, having crossed the Simplon Pass. Settling in, he rented the cheapest room in No. 6 Santa Maria Segreta Street, near the Milan Cathedral. No one in the city knew this mysterious traveller's real name. However, the Italian poet Fernando Fontana knew that the stranger was Russian, that his surname was Grigorovich and that he was in dire straits. The poet quickly introduced his Russian friend to the publisher of the Milan newspaper *Il Pungolo*. In November 1881, the paper began to print a series of letters from a Russian patriot under the title of "La Russia sotterranea" (Underground Russia). These letters told about Russian revolutionaries, men of great courage and nobility; about those who fought despotism in the name of popular well-being, and about those who embodied the revolutionary, underground Russia. The letters were all signed by a certain "Stepniak". Our reader will already have guessed that the mysterious Signor Fetter, the Russian Grigorovich and this Stepniak were all one and the same person. But who was he? He was none other than Sergei Mikhailovich Kravchinsky, the well-known Russian revolutionary and fugitive from the tsarist gendarmes.

...On 7 December 1873, a secret order No. 3776, which originated in the infamous Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Chancellory, informed all local

gendarmeries of the escape of two dangerous revolutionaries known as Sergei Kravchinsky and Dmitry Rogachev.

These two were childhood friends, now 22 years old, who had studied together in a military school and then became officers after completing the course at the military academy. They quickly resigned their commissions and enrolled in universities. A more intellectual life, one full of searching, now began for the two former officers.

Kravchinsky was of medium height, stocky, with a high forehead and brown eyes distinguished by their penetrating sullenness. His hair was thick and abundant, his beard small and curly and he always dressed with the best of taste, but not flashily or showy. He had a compulsion for order: he studied at the same time every day, and rose, dined and went to bed with the same regularity. He never drank tea, observing that "tea inclines one to slovenliness and idle chatter. Nothing has caused so much harm to the Russians than this endless, placid tea-drinking which only leads to dissipation."

During Kravchinsky's younger years many important changes had occurred in Russia. The usual educated nobility, who traditionally were the centre of intellectual life, were replaced by a wave of individuals from the clergy, the merchant class, the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, the bureaucracy and the classroom. A stormy process of "democratisation" was under way in the educated segment of society. These *raznochintsy* (as those of un noble background were called in Russia) became the pivotal figures in social movement.

The younger generation among them was drawn to "the people", those oppressed and needy, the suffering Russian nation. What could they do to help? And would it be possible to rouse the people to revolution and overthrow the tsar? Those who were concerned with the fate of the nation and who wanted to organise a social revolution in the country were soon known as Narodniks (Populists).

Narodism (Populism) was a whole epoch, a broad social movement which prevailed in Russia during the

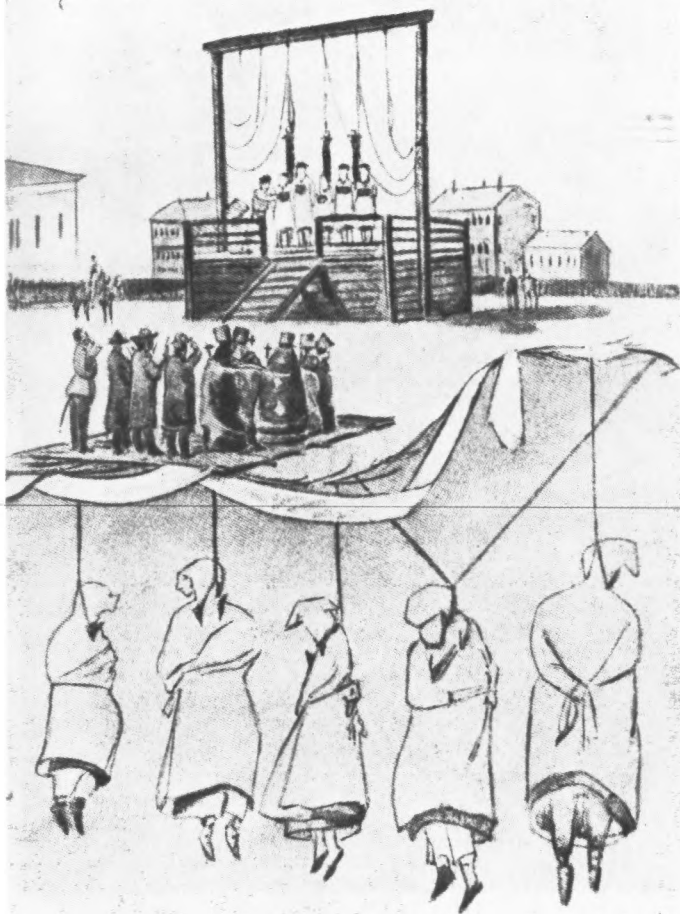


Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky,
London. Photograph. 1887



The trenches around the Winter
Palace after the March Days.
Drawing from the journal
Illustrated London News

3^{го} апрѣля Пятница 1881 года 9^{оо} часовъ вѣтрн.



Execution. Drawing by
A. A. Nesvetovich



Sofia Perovskaya and Andrei
Zhelyabov. A drawing by
P. Ya. Pyasetsky during the trial

Sergei Stepniak-Kravchinsky.
A drawing by Bernard Shaw



A group of political emigrants in
London. Standing third from
right: Sergei
Stepniak-Kravchinsky

ENGLISH EDITION.

Free Russia

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THE English Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, founded in April, 1890, has for its objects to aid, to the extent of its powers, the Russian patriots who are trying to obtain for their country that Political Freedom and Self-government which Western nations have enjoyed for generations.

The Society appeals to the enlightened men and women of all countries, without distinction of nationality or political creed, who cannot witness with indifference the horrors perpetrated in the Empire of the Tsar, and who wish a better future for the masses of the Russian people. Further contributions to the funds and further work are needed and will be welcome. Membership is acquired by sending to the Treasurer an annual subscription of or exceeding Five Shillings. Members are entitled to receive *Free Russia* post free.

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The first page of the English edition of the journal *Free Russia*.

second half of the 19th century. It was born during a period when capitalism was still fairly underdeveloped in Russia, when the working class had just come into being and when it seemed that the peasants were the basic revolutionary force.

The actions of these revolutionary Narodniks expressed the interests of the oppressed and disenfranchised peasantry. They were of the opinion that Russia might be able to by-pass the capitalist path of development and, basing itself on the communal experience of the Russian peasants, could immediately make the jump to socialism. In their opinion, the peasant commune opened up the possibility of Russia's moving more quickly and easily, than the capitalist countries, to a socialist system.

In evaluating the activities of these revolutionary Narodniks, Lenin wrote: "*Faith in a special social order, in the communal system of Russian life; hence — faith in the possibility of a peasant socialist revolution* — that is what inspired them and roused dozens and hundreds of people to wage a heroic struggle against the government." ¹

The views of the Narodniks in the 1870s were influenced as well by the struggles waged by the international proletariat, the activities of the First International and the Paris Commune. In the aforementioned *Underground Russia* Kravchinsky wrote that in 1871 the Russian revolutionary found himself faced with the picture of an enormous city which had risen to defend the rights of the people. The inhabitants of this city had perished in the name of "a grand idea, that of claiming the rights of the people". "And at the same time," wrote Kravchinsky, "falls upon his ear the plaintive song of the Russian peasant: all wailing and lamentation, in which so many ages of suffering seem concentrated. His squalid misery, his whole life stands forth full of sorrow, of suffering, of outrage. Look at him: exhausted by hunger, broken down by toil, the eternal slave of the privileged classes, working without pause, without hope

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, pp. 263-64.

of redemption; for the Government purposely keeps him ignorant, and everyone robs him, everyone tramples on him, and no one stretches out a hand to assist him. No one? Not so. The young man knows 'what to do'. He will stretch forth his hand. He will tell the peasant how to free himself and become happy."¹

The Russian Narodniks were directly involved in the international revolutionary movement as well. In the beginning of 1870, the Russian Section of the First International was formed in Geneva and was composed of such revolutionaries as Nikolai Utin, Anton Trusov, the Bartenevs (husband and wife) and Elizaveta Tomanovskaya who had fought on the barricades of the Paris Commune under the name of Elizaveta Dmitriyeva. On 12 March 1870, the Committee of the Russian Section appealed to Marx that he represented the Russian Section on the General Council of the International Working Men's Association. Marx's answer came two weeks later:

"Citizens,

"At its meeting of March 22, the General Council declared by unanimous vote that your programme and rules accord with the general rules of the International Working Men's Association. It immediately admitted your section into the International. I am pleased to take on the honourable duty of being your representative on the General Council."²

"To the People!"

In Russia at that stormy time, a public trial was taking place which resounded throughout the whole country. In the summer of 1871 the members of a revolutionary organisation under Sergei Nechayev were on trial. The question was immediately raised: is it possible to heed Nechayev's call that any means are permissible in preparing for revolution?

The Narodniks answered categorically no. They

¹ Stepaniak, *Underground Russia. Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, Smith, Elder, & Co., London, 1883, pp. 11-12.

² Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1985, p. 110.

came out against the Jesuit system of the organisation created by Nechayev, against adventurism and unprincipled approaches and against hypocrisy in the revolutionary movement. According to the well-known Narodnik Nikolai Charushin, "an organisation based on deceit and headed by a 'general' whom all must blindly obey, could not hope for a prolonged and productive existence".¹ "His theory that the end justifies the means repelled us, and the murder of Ivanov horrified and disgusted us."² Thus wrote Vera Figner, a revolutionary Narodnik, of Nechayev's methods.

Even Kravchinsky expressed his opinion of Nechayev's actions: "Personally, I think that Nechayev was, by nature, a rather heroic figure, sincere and respectable, in spite of his roguish behaviour, but as a political activist ... he was the absolute embodiment of shame... All of his so-called activities were nothing more than a crude and filthy farce."³

The Narodniks' activities were, from the very start, directed against the so-called Nechayevism. The struggle was not only for the political, but also for the moral principles of the movement. They were deeply concerned with the problem of the ethics of revolution.

As a result an illegal society of youth appeared who were known as the *Chaikovtsy*, after one of its leaders Nikolai Chaikovsky. Kravchinsky took an active part in this organisation and quickly became friends with its members: Petr Kropotkin, Sofia Perovskaya, Dmitry Klements and Nikolai Morozov, fine, honest and self-denying individuals. This society had no commanding, authoritative figures, everything was based on trust and respect for the individual; on honest and sincere relationships between the members and on an all-encompassing devotion to the people. The fate

¹ N. A. Charushin, *The Distant Past*, Moscow, 1973, p. 100 (in Russian).

² V. N. Figner, *Collected Works*, in seven volumes, Vol. I, Moscow, 1932, p. 91 (in Russian).

³ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1972, p. 10 (in Russian).

of these deeply troubled the members of this society who were all ready to commit themselves entirely to the emancipation of people. But, how to approach them, and where to begin? It was decided to abandon all revolutionary adventurism, all calls for an immediate popular uprising, in a word, to abandon entirely Nechayev's programme. What was needed was a protracted propaganda campaign and educational activity among the people.

In Petersburg the Chaikovtsy had already begun to teach the workers to read and write and were instructing them in the fundamentals of arithmetic, geography and history. They were engaged in discussions about the injustices in their lives, about quit-rent and taxes... Kravchinsky and his friends Sofia Perovskaya, Dmitry Rogachev and Sergei Sinegub were all involved in such activities.

Kravchinsky, with all his energy and enthusiasm, threw himself completely into this new work. The workers were taken by his simple and easily understood manner of discussion, by his obvious love for his work. It was in this way that the Narodniks became more closely aligned with the urban workers. But the *raznochintsy* still considered that the people's strength, its revolutionary potential lay not in the city, but in the village. And so it was decided to go there, to determine on the spot what the peasantry's position, attitudes and intentions were and to urge them to rise against the monarchy.

In the autumn of 1873, Kravchinsky and Rogachev, disguised as wood-cutters, were among the first to "go to the people". The reconnaissance mission was to open the door to a broad democratic movement known as "going to the people". But more about that later.

Right now let us take a look at how these two propagandists set about their work. They had a poor idea as to what the popular psychology was all about, what were the people's views, naively thinking that their propaganda about the revolution would be immediately snatched up by the peasantry. But their first encounters were extremely disappointing... Travelling along a quiet country road, Kravchinsky

and Rogachev came upon a peasant quietly going his own way. Kravchinsky immediately began to explain to him that he shouldn't pay his taxes, that the bureaucrats were robbing the people and that there was a need to revolt. Upon hearing all this, the peasant whipped up his horse and sped up his pace. The two "wood-cutters" also quickened their steps and continued to urge him to rise in revolt. At that, the peasant whipped his horse to a gallop and sped away from his overly persistent companions. Thus this first attempt at propagandising ended in a failure. As a result, both Kravchinsky and Rogachev began to pay more attention to the particulars of peasant life, engaging the peasants in discussions on subjects that were easily understandable and of actual interest to the peasantry. The peasants listened to them, and thought about what they said. Sometimes the two friends were able to gather a small group together in the evenings and read aloud from popular books, making references to the Gospel, attempting to prove the necessity for a struggle against the government and the landowners.

Rumours of these two mysterious wood-cutters spread from village to village. The peasants even began to whisper about them and hope for the time when the land would be taken back from the landowners. There were even those who exasperated by the police powers, said: "Just wait, our turn will come soon. You, sons of Herod, will not lord over us forever!"

The news of propagandising among the peasantry spread to the local village officials. Kravchinsky and Rogachev were arrested but managed to escape. After this, the secret order No. 3776 made its appearance...

The fugitives made their way to Moscow where life was in full swing: university and grammar school students, seminarians, military cadets were all getting ready to "go to the people". This first experiment by Kravchinsky and Rogachev helped them in this new and rather unusual situation. The two shared their experiences with their comrades as to how, in the evenings, in a hut, dark except for the faint light of the

moon, they would tell the peasants about socialism. Overestimating the results of their activities, they maintained that the peasants understood them. This inspired a certain confidence in the successful outcome of the revolutionary youth's "going to the people". It was time to begin...

The spring of 1874 saw the beginning of this mass "going to the people". Seven years later, Kravchinsky, in his *Underground Russia*, recalled those days: "It was as if a mighty cry, coming from somewhere unknown, carried across the whole country, summoning everyone whose soul was still alive, to the great task of saving the country and all of mankind. And everyone, whose soul was still alive, answered the call, going out filled with melancholy and dissatisfied with their prior life. Leaving their homes, wealth, honour and families, they gave themselves up fully to the movement, with an ecstatic enthusiasm and burning faith that knows no bounds, no sacrifices and for which suffering and death are the greatest stimulus to action."¹

To "go to the people" one needed some sort of profession, and so there quickly appeared carpenters', blacksmiths' and shoemakers' workshops where the Narodnik propagandists could learn a trade. The necessary peasant clothing was also made, as well as false passports, and underground literature written for the peasants.

In April and May young people from Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Samara and other large cities set out for the Volga, the Ural, the Dnieper and the Don. It was thought that these specific areas were the ones where the revolutionary traditions were still alive among the people. After all, it was here that the popular uprisings led by Yemelyan Pugachev and Stepan Razin took place, and here the freedom-loving Cossacks often rose up against the tsar.

Moscow became the meeting place for many of the propagandists. The most active among them, Sergei

¹ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Works*, in two volumes, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, p. 380 (in Russian).

Kovalik, Porfiry Voinaralsky, Alexander Ivanchin-Pisarev, Nikolai Morozov and others would meet in the apartment of O. G. Alexeyeva, the wife of a wealthy Tambov landowner. Even Kravchinsky would shop up here occasionally. The visitors never stayed very long. "Having spent a day or a little more," recalled Morozov, "they would leave again, sent off with kisses, hugs and all kinds of good wishes, like old friends going off on a dangerous mission. They would then disappear without a trace beyond the horizon in an unknown, limitless distance."¹

What were the tasks of these propagandists who decided to "go to the people"? Some were hoping to rouse the peasants to immediate revolution, to overthrow the autocracy and to institute a just social structure. Others were intending to propagandise socialism. The aims of these participants were varied, and even among those who were adherents of the plan for peasant revolution, there was little consensus. Among those more radical elements there were two tendencies: the supporters of Petr Lavrov called for scrupulous preparations for revolutionary action; and those who adhered to Bakunin's doctrine believed that the people were already mature enough for the revolutionary struggle. And during this stormy period both Kravchinsky and Rogachev had to act. Let's take a look at how their lives took shape.

On the eve of this "going to the people", Kravchinsky and Rogachev made the acquaintance of one of the organisers of the movement, Porfiry Voinaralsky. In the early 1860s Voinaralsky had been exiled to Vyatka and then to Vologda provinces for his part in the student movement at Moscow University. Six years later he returned from exile and settled at his mother's estate. Voinaralsky came from a family of means and he turned over the whole of his fortune to the movement "going to the people". Upon learning that Kravchinsky and Rogachev were on the run from the police, he

¹ N. A. Morozov, *The Stories of My Life*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1947, p. 94 (in Russian).

obtained false documents, turning the two of them into seminarians: Kravchinsky became Sviridov and Rogachev was now known as Orlov.

Fate soon intervened and separated the two friends. Kravchinsky set off with Dmitry Klements to propagandise in Tula Province.

Klements was a charming, simple man, an incomparable story-teller and an inspired and talented propagandist who was born on the shores of the Volga. "His free-spirited, lush speech, sprinkled with images and metaphors, shines with the treasures of Russian folk language," wrote Kravchinsky. Klements looked like a Simbirsk peasant, in a black caftan which he wore unbuttoned over a loose peasant shirt, a brass-buttoned vest and blue trousers tucked into his boots. His conversation with the peasants was permeated with folk sayings and jokes. His listeners laughed until their sides hurt. But in his jokes the story-teller managed to hide a serious thought which was imprinted in the minds of his listeners.

So, Kravchinsky and Klements set off for Tula Province, and Rogachev, at Voinaralsky's suggestion, left for the village of Nizhny-Shkaft in Penza Province, disguised as a clerk.

Propaganda work developed especially well among the peasants of the Danilov District in Yaroslavl Province. Everything began in the village of Potapovo, where Ivanchin-Pisarev, a member of various Narodnik circles, had an estate. In the beginning of May 1874, Morozov, Sablin and Alexeyeva, Ivanchin-Pisarev's friends and comrades, arrived at the estate. They had decided to take advantage of the Sunday village fairs. Young men and women from the surrounding villages came to Potapovo to swing on swings, dance and sing folk songs.

Narodnik propagandists quickly moved from one location to another, from town to town and from village to village. But the energy they expended did not correspond to the results they achieved as the peasantry, as a whole, remained deaf to the calls of the Narodniks. Meanwhile, the tsarist authorities were even on the alert and constantly sending their police forces against the revolutionaries.

A letter dated 28 November 1874 from the Chief of the police department of Moskva Province, a certain Slezkin, is preserved in the archives: "Inquiries have revealed that the criminal actions of the propagandists during the performance of inquests, searches and arrests not only did not decrease, but intensified even more; for example, Rogachev, Kravchinsky and Klements were engaged in propaganda activities among the young and workers first in one location, then in another, and all this at the very same time when they were wanted by the Third Section..."¹

Yes, the police were searching for Kravchinsky everywhere; his personal data had been widely circulated: "Retired artillery lieutenant. Tall, solidly built, approximately 26 years old, dark, curly hair, has a beard and a mustache; large and well-defined facial features; high forehead; mature; speaks in a high, slightly squeaky tenor..."²

Kravchinsky was being forced to emigrate, and did so in the spring of 1875. His life in Western Europe had begun.

A Russian Emigrant

Kravchinsky spent time in Italy, Belgium, England and France. In the summer of 1875 while in Paris he learned that in Herzegovina the Slavs had risen against the Turks. Together with Mikhail Sazhin, another Russian emigrant, Kravchinsky left for that area. It was decided to take the side of the insurgents. Kravchinsky thought that the participation of Russian revolutionaries in a Slavic struggle for independence would help not only the Balkan people, but the Russians themselves. They would get the experience of an armed uprising for their struggle with the monarchy.

While in Herzegovina, Kravchinsky made the acquaintance of the Italian followers of Garibaldi,

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, Moscow, 1973, p. 85 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

and became particularly close to the well-known Italian revolutionary Enrico Malatesta.

Arriving in Herzegovina, Kravchinsky was, at first, in a very optimistic frame of mind: "...It is worth coming," he wrote to his friends, "the uprising is purely popular, peasant in origin. There are no obvious social goals in it, but there is no deceit either... The uprising is not only growing, but becoming more organised. Sympathy is all-encompassing." But, as time wore on, a certain disappointment set in. Kravchinsky himself was unprepared for this fight, and its goals were never quite clear to him: "...there isn't even a hint of socialism here... The struggle is purely political: liberation from the Turks. What this will all lead to, no one knows."

From Herzegovina, Kravchinsky left for Geneva where he took part in the publication of the illegal Narodnik newspaper *Rabotnik* (The Worker). Soon he appeared in Russia.

Towards the end of 1876 the youth of St. Petersburg were attempting to unite all the various study-groups into one organisation. To this end all sorts of meetings were taking place, discussions on the basis of which these young people tried to learn from their mistakes. Numerous plans were proposed to consolidate their strength. And at one of these gatherings, Kravchinsky met Dmitry Lizogub, a tall, thin, poorly-dressed blonde with an 'apostolic' beard and pleasant, kind blue eyes. He was 26 at the time and had inherited his father's million-rouble estate which consisted of a huge manor-house and the surrounding land and forests. But this "millionaire" considered it immoral to spend one kopeck more than necessary on himself. He had no family, and "never in his life had he been in love with a woman", Kravchinsky wrote of his new friend. Lizogub dedicated himself, heart and soul, to the revolution. He was one of the initiators of the Narodnik organisation *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom). His life ended tragically, but we'll have more to say about this later...

And in St. Petersburg, Kravchinsky met his old friend Dmitry Rogachev. Since they had not seen

each other for nearly three years they had much to talk about and the reunion was a happy one. But it was to be their last. The police had long been searching for Rogachev and he was often forced to live in extremely conspiratorial circumstances. He had appeared in Petersburg under the name of Ivan Zvonnikov. On 14 August 1876 he was visiting Kleopatra Blavdzevich, with whom he had done propaganda work in Penza. Suddenly the apartment was invaded by the police: a search. They demanded Rogachev's identification papers and he presented the false passport. It wasn't long before a police clerk recorded: "An inquest into the affairs of Ivan Zvonnikov, real name: Dmitry Mikhailovich Rogachev, retired artillery lieutenant, charged with treason..."

By the end of 1876 Kravchinsky was again abroad. He was living at Strada Ventaglieri No. 77 in Naples, under the name of Abram Rublev, a merchant from Kherson.

At that time Kravchinsky's Italian friends in Naples had devised a plan for an uprising in the Matesian Mountains in the south of Benevento Province. Kravchinsky quickly and enthusiastically joined their venture and he was entrusted with organising an arms depot in the region of the uprising. In early April 1877, Kravchinsky, together with a young Russian woman whose identity remains unknown, arrived in the village of San Lupo, on the slopes of the Matesian Mountains. They rented a small house which became the location of the cache and soon large boxes began to appear there. Then, Kravchinsky left for the railway station in Solopacce where he was to meet the organisers of the uprising. But on the night of 5 April, Kravchinsky and his Italian friends were arrested by the Italian police. He was first imprisoned in the Benevento local jail, and then transferred to the prison of Santa Maria Capua Vetere.

Other initiators of the uprising were also being held there: revolutionaries from Florence and Naples, Ravenna and Capua, Perugia and Imola. These were various individuals who spoke various dialects and into their midst came this lone Russian.

Kravchinsky decided not to waste his time and immediately began to study Italian. Soon the dialects of the north and the south were more or less understandable to him and he listened avidly to the endless stories of his prison companions.

The trial of these 34 participants (including Kravchinsky) in the attempt at an uprising in Benevento was quickly approaching. But fate was kind to some of these prisoners. On 9 January 1878, Victor Emmanuel II died and Humbert (Umberto) I, his son, became the King of Italy and declared an amnesty. Kravchinsky, the Kherson merchant Abram Rublev, was among those released by this amnesty. Without a penny in his pocket, Kravchinsky set out on foot from the south of Italy and traversing nearly all of the country, made his way to Switzerland.

A Showdown with the Autocracy

On 18 October 1877, a large-scale trial, that of 193 revolutionaries, had begun. The sessions were conducted in the St. Petersburg District Court. The small hall held the defendants, witnesses, gendarme officers and members of the court; public spectators were few in number. The defendants' hopes for a public political trial were quashed and they were denied a forum. But the courageous speeches of the defendants, even at this closed trial, revealed the autocratic system.

Attention was focused on the speech by the Narodnik Ippolit Myshkin, given on behalf of his friends on 15 November and later highly praised by Kravchinsky. In this speech he said that the Russian revolutionary party was attempting, through revolution, to create a social order which would conform to the desires of the people. Myshkin was constantly interrupted by the chairman of the court, but he stubbornly continued, ending his remarks by saying: "Now I have every right to say that this is not a trial but a farce, or even worse, something more odious and shameful than a whorehouse: there a woman sells herself of necessity, where here the senators do the

same out of baseness and servility. Here they sell others' lives for rank and for high salaries; they sell the truth and justice, everything that mankind holds most sacred." A gendarme officer grabbed Myshkin and attempted to gag him and remove him from the court-room. But Myshkin's compatriots quickly came to his aid and pandemonium broke loose... The chairman of the court did not know what to do. The public prosecutor Zhelikovsky cried out: "This is sheer revolution!"

On 23 January 1878 the sentence was announced: Ippolit Myshkin, Porfiry Voinaralsky, Sergei Kovalik and Dmitry Rogachev were condemned to ten years of hard labour. Many other revolutionaries received sentences of varying length, and some were exiled to Siberia.

In February of the same year, Kravchinsky published a long article on the Trial of the 193 in the Geneva-based journal *Obshchina* (The Commune) published by Russian emigrants. "Rejoice, my dear, distant brothers," he wrote, "for news of your victory has already spread throughout the world, a victory of the spirit over despotism and brute force. Your brothers, the proletariat of the world have also heard, as has all of Rus, from sea to sea. In all its nooks and crannies your names are repeated with reverence and your heroic struggle is spoken of ecstatically. And new warriors, inspired and impassioned, rush forward under that banner which you have so glorified..."

While in Switzerland, Kravchinsky also heard of another act of great heroism and moral strength. Here is what happened in Petersburg:

A certain General Trepov, the Governor of St. Petersburg, had ordered the political prisoner Bogolyubov (already sentenced to hard labour) to be flogged for not removing his cap while in the general's presence. A protest against this was expressed by all the other prisoners held in the Petersburg Remand House, where the punishment was meted out. Those who were free demanded that Trepov be himself punished.

"This is for Bogolyubov, whom you ordered flogged!" And with this a slender young woman pulled

a revolver from her muff and fired at Trepov. This all took place on 24 January 1878 in the reception room of the Governor's office. The assassin was seized and it was revealed that her name was Vera Zasulich. "Zasulich," wrote Kravchinsky, "was hardly a terrorist. She was an angel of vengeance who voluntarily surrendered herself to go like a sacrificial lamb to the slaughter, in order to wipe that shameful spot of grievous offence from the body of the party."¹

The trial began on 31 March... Sincerity sounded in the words of the defendant. Zasulich claimed that she interpreted Trepov's punishment of Bogolyubov as an outrage that could not go unavenged. And she waited to see if someone would take the initiative. But she soon saw that no one was willing to speak out, and that "nothing would prevent Trepov, or another such almighty figure from exercising their capriciousness again and again". Zasulich then decided, "even at the risk of her own life, to prove that there could be no guarantee that such disrespect for the individual would go unpunished". She ended her speech by saying that she could find no other means to bring this kind of arbitrariness to light: "It is a terrible thing to raise your hand against another human being, but I felt that I must do just that..."

What happened next was completely unexpected. The jury chaired by the famous Russian legal activist Anatoly Koni delivered a verdict of "not guilty". The defendant left the court-room a free woman, surrounded by a triumphant crowd. The tsar was justifiably angered by the court's decision and ordered that Zasulich be immediately arrested. But it was already too late. Zasulich was spirited away by friends who then arranged for her escape abroad...

In May, 1878, Kravchinsky is again in Petersburg. Although less than three years had passed since he was forced to abandon Russia, many dramatic changes and events had occurred. A new illegal revolutionary organisation of *raznochintsy* had appeared under the name of Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom) (1876-

¹ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Works*, in two volumes, Vol. I, p. 388 (in Russian).

1879). Its name reflected the essence of its programme: to give all land to the peasants and freedom to all working people. Members of this organisation agitated among the peasants and workers alike, issuing leaflets and organising strikes.

The struggle was continuing and Kravchinsky was glad that he was now at home, in the midst of it. But the fact remained that the police were still searching for him. His description was circulated throughout the Empire. He was in danger of being arrested at any minute. So, Abram Rublev, the merchant from Khereson, became a Georgian prince, in an elegant summer suit and top hat. The fine-sounding title won over both his landlady and the custodian of his building. Every time that the prince was out, the custodian would courteously announce to the visitor that "His Highness is not in now; he has just left." Meanwhile, "the prince" was not wasting any time.

Kravchinsky joined *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom) in 1878, recruited new members, set up a large underground press, wrote articles and leaflets, did various translations. He was always busy, always hurrying, giving himself up entirely to the fight.

In the morning of 4 August 1878, Tsar Alexander II received the following report: "Today, at approximately 9:00 a. m., the Chief of the Gendarmerie, Adjutant-General Mezentsev, during his morning walk with the retired Colonel Makarov along Mikhailovskaya Square, was confronted by an unknown assailant in front of the house belonging to Kochkurov. This young man, of medium height, wearing glasses and dressed in a grey coat, stopped approximately three paces away from the general and, hurling himself on him, stabbed him in the chest. He then quickly disappeared around the corner onto Bolshaya Italian-skaya Street..."¹ The assailant got into the carriage which was waiting for him on the corner and to which was hitched the famous trotter Barbarian. This very same horse, which had so often before saved many a Russian revolutionary, carried him away through the

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 171 (in Russian).

streets of Petersburg. The bold stranger, who was none other than Kravchinsky, managed to escape.

Kravchinsky, a rather soft-hearted and humane individual, hesitated long and hard before deciding to attempt the assassination. The day came and Kravchinsky, carrying his Italian dagger, went out to meet Mezentsev. It was time to act. But the would-be assassin was psychologically unprepared and simply walked past his victim. The same thing happened on the next day as well. When Kravchinsky's friend Nikolai Morozov heard about all this, he said to his friend: "Stop it, Sergei! You'll only torture yourself and you'll never be able to stab anyone." "I will overcome that soft-heartedness which is fatal to a revolutionary, even if I have to die for doing so," was Kravchinsky's answer.

Further events put an end to Kravchinsky's hesitation. On 2 August the revolutionary Kovalsky was executed by the tsarist butchers. And after this, Kravchinsky made his attempt. "One death for another, an eye for an eye," he thus reasoned. And such was the title he gave to the pamphlet which appeared immediately after the assassination of Mezentsev. "Murder is a terrible thing," he wrote. "Only at a specific moment, when under the influence of a powerful force, and already, in some respects, unconscious, can a man who is not a monster and a degenerate deprive another of his life. The Russian government has forced us, socialists, individuals who have dedicated ourselves to the liberation of the suffering and condemned ourselves to all sorts of torture in order to spare others, to commit a series of murders, to make them a part of our programme."¹

The assassination of the Chief of the Gendarmerie caused a stir in the capital. Everyone and everything centred around the search for the murderer: searches, arrests on the most insignificant of grounds. A ring was closing in on Kravchinsky and he was forced to submit to a "quarantine", that is, to sit at home, in the apartment of one of the conspirators and not

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 173 (in Russian).

to go out into the street. But he heard that Valerian Ossinsky had arrived from Kiev. Kravchinsky had heard much about Ossinsky, one of the first Narodniks who had issued the call for a political struggle for civil liberties in Russia. He considered that each blow from the government must be answered by a similar blow from the side of the revolutionaries. And he headed the Land and Freedom Executive Committee which was charged with that task. How could Kravchinsky resist meeting such an individual?

At great risk, Kravchinsky abandoned his refuge and went to meet Ossinsky... A friendly handshake. Later, Kravchinsky wrote about his new comrade: "He was as beautiful as the sun. Lithe, well-proportioned, strong and flexible as a blade of steel. His head, with its flaxen hair somewhat thrown back, was gracefully poised upon his delicate and sinewy neck. His high and fair forehead was furrowed, upon his somewhat narrow temple, by some blue veins. A straight nose, which in profile seemed as though it had been carved by an artistic chisel, gave to his countenance that character of classical beauty which is so rare in Russia. ...And all this Apollo-like face was lighted up by two very fine blue eyes, large, intelligent, full of fire, and of youthful daring."¹ The next day Ossinsky came to visit Kravchinsky and the two sat deep in discussion making plans for the future struggle, until it was time for Ossinsky to leave.

In January 1879, Ossinsky was arrested in Kiev. He was tried and given the death sentence. On 14 May, together with two comrades, he was led out to be executed. His friends were hanged right in front of him and this sight so shook Ossinsky that his hair instantly turned white. But he courageously refused a pardon and firmly mounted the scaffold...

The revolutionaries suffered yet another devastating loss. Lizogub was betrayed by his steward whom the government promised the remainder of his master's estate, 40,000 roubles. The sentence handed down by the military tribunal was death. And on 8 August

¹ Stepniak, *Underground Russia. Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, p. 83.

1879 Lizogub was taken out to be executed. The condemned was calm. "At last," wrote Kravchinsky, "he could satisfy his ardent desire to sacrifice himself for his cause. It was perhaps the happiest moment of his unhappy life."¹

At that time when these events were occurring, Kravchinsky was no longer in Russia. His friends had long been trying to convince him to emigrate, but he would not agree. He was then given the important task of testing new explosives. These tests could best be carried out in the mountains of Switzerland and at the end of 1878 Kravchinsky left Russia...

And thus began years of wandering and the poverty of an émigré. The hope of returning to his homeland never left him, but the trip was constantly postponed. His wife, Fanny Luchkus, arrived to join him and gave birth to a son in May of 1879. The child survived for only a few days. Life became increasingly more difficult with no money, no income and no peace of mind as Kravchinsky was constantly followed by spies. But finally Kravchinsky got lucky. The editor of the Russian democratic journal *Dyelo* (The Cause) gave his approval for publishing Raffaello Giovagnoli's novel *Spartaco* in a translation by Kravchinsky. And in 1880-1881 the novel was published. Money started to come in and life, in a material sense, became easier. But that was only half the story. All his thoughts were with Russia and news was constantly arriving from the homeland.

Zemlya i Volya (Land and Freedom), the organisation in which Kravchinsky had so actively participated had split into two new parties: Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) and Chorny Peredel (The General Redistribution). The latter stood on the former Narodnik platform, calling for continued propaganda.

The aim of the People's Will was a struggle with the autocracy for political freedoms. And the foremost means in this struggle was to be terror. In an attempt to deal a mortal blow to the enemy, its Executive Committee passed the death sentence on the tsar...

¹ Stepniak, *Underground Russia. Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, pp. 109-10.

During these first months of the struggle, the members of the People's Will were engaged in putting the finishing touches on their programme. On 1 January 1880, the programme was published. Its initial paragraph stated: "We are Socialists and Narodniks by virtue of our fundamental beliefs. We are convinced that only on the basis of socialism will mankind be able to realise the dreams of freedom, equality, fraternity, will be able to guarantee a common material well-being and a complete and all-encompassing development of the individual and, consequently, progress. We are convinced that only the will of the people can sanction social forms, that national development will stabilise only then, when it will occur independently and freely, when every idea which can be realised in life, will initially pass through the consciousness and will of the people. The common good and the will of the people are our two most sacred and most intimately linked principles."¹

But the people themselves, according to the members of the People's Will, were unable to bring about a revolutionary coup on their own, and unable to seize power. Only this organisation could do that. It would take power and transfer it to the Constituent Assembly. It would begin the revolution with a blow to the autocracy, the assassination of the tsar...

The Narodniks showed great inventiveness. On the basis of a special recommendation a carpenter-cabinet-maker by the name of Stepan Batyshkov was hired to work in the Winter Palace. Here is what Kravchinsky had to say about him: "He was tall and broad-shouldered, with the agile build of a Caucasian *dzhigit* [horseman]. His head could have easily served as a model for Alcibiades. He was gifted with extraordinarily regular features, a high, smooth forehead, fine lips and an energetic chin with a small chestnut-coloured pointed beard."² Batyshkov was charged with repairing the furniture in the tsar's chambers. He quickly

¹ *Revolutionary Narodism in the 1870s*, Vol. II, Moscow-Leningrad, 1965, pp. 170-71 (in Russian).

² S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Works*, in two volumes, Vol. I, p. 607 (in Russian).

became close friends with one of the palace guards and began to play the role of "fiancé" to his daughter. And thus it was that under the name of Batyshkov, Stepan Khalturin was able to make his way into the Imperial residence. Khalturin was a leading revolutionary, a worker and an organiser of the Northern Union of Russian Workers which had ties with the People's Will. "Alexander II must die at the hand of a worker," he maintained.

Zhelyabov was able to obtain nearly 8 poods (about 130 kg) of dynamite which Khalturin hid in a cellar of the Winter Palace...

In the evening of 5 February 1880, the empress' brother, Prince Alexander of Hesse, was expected to arrive in the capital. The Winter Palace was ablaze with lights and surrounded by the police and gendarmes. The prince arrived and after the usual ceremonies was invited to the table... At that moment there was an explosion...

It was soon learned that the assassination attempt was unsuccessful. The tsar was unhurt.

The Executive Committee of the People's Will expanded its activities. It stepped up propaganda among the workers, the military and the students. But its main attention was drawn to preparing another attempt on the life of the tsar.

At the end of 1880 a signboard appeared over a shop on the corner of Nevsky Prospekt and Malaya Sadovaya Street: "Kobozev's Store for Russian Cheeses". The shop was like any other cheese shop: barrels, crates, wheels of cheese and a counter. Behind the counter was a door leading to the owner's lodgings which held a bed covered with a mountain of pillows, a portrait of the tsar and an icon in the corner of the room. The round-faced owner with his thick beard and his high-cheekboned wife aroused no suspicion: they were obviously peasants who had become merchants. In reality these "merchants" who had settled into this half-basement were Yuri Bogdanovich and Anna Yakimova, members of the Executive Committee. From this cheese shop on Malaya Sadovaya St. a tunnel was dug. The mine that was constructed there was to deliver a death blow to the tsar who usually passed this

way. If, by some chance, the tsar changed his route or if the mine did not detonate, then four conspirators, each with a bomb, would spring into action.

The emperor's comings and goings were under constant observation. The Committee had resolved: "No delays, everything must be accomplished by 1 March." And everything seemed to be moving towards that end when suddenly... In the evening of 27 February Zhelyabov, the leader of the enterprise, was arrested in the rooms let by a Madame Messuro on Nevsky Prospekt. The undertaking, which had become the focus of the People's Will was suddenly threatened.

They needed to find someone who, at this critical moment could take Zhelyabov's place. And that "someone" was the 27-year-old daughter of the Governor of St. Petersburg, Sofia Perovskaya. Perovskaya had already severed her ties with the aristocracy in the name of the people and was completely devoted to the revolution. She now took upon herself the role of leader in preparing for the assassination attempt. Perovskaya took Zhelyabov's arrest very hard: not only had the People's Will lost their leader, but Perovskaya had lost her beloved.

Even in these difficult circumstances Sofia remained unbowed. A feeling of duty, Kravchinsky wrote about her, was her strongest trait. She could make herself into a true Stoic who could withstand the worst blows of fate. Everything was ready by the night of February 28: the mine was in place on Malaya Sadovaya, the hand bombs were prepared and the final instructions issued.

Morning broke on 1 March. The four bomb-throwers, Mikhailov, Grinevitsky, Yemelyanov and Rysakov, took their places on Perovskaya's instructions. The conspirators' hopes rested now on "Kobozev's Cheese Shop", but the tsar changed his route and did not come down the Malaya Sadovaya. Perovskaya figured that the tsar would come down the Yekaterininsky Canal and repositioned her bomb-throwers accordingly.

Around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the imperial cortege appeared. On the opposite side of the canal

Perovskaya raised her handkerchief to her face, giving the necessary signal. A second later a powerful explosion shook the air. The tsar's suite was hit by the bomb thrown by Rysakov, but the emperor himself was untouched. He emerged from his carriage and approached the bomb-thrower who was already under arrest.

"Who is this?" the emperor inquired.

"The petty bourgeois Gryaznov."

"Nice," the emperor answered ironically and moved towards his carriage. At that moment he was approached by a young man holding his hands behind his back. He suddenly raised a white package over his head and tossed it down between himself and the tsar. The tsar and the bomb-thrower, 25-year-old Ignaty Grinevitsky, were mortally wounded. The night before, Grinevitsky had made out his will: "Fate had condemned me to an early death and I will not see our victory or live a single day, not even a single hour, in the shining future of our triumph. But I think that my death will accomplish everything that must be accomplished... The job of the revolutionary party is to set fire to that flammable material which has already been gathered, to throw a spark into the powder and then to do everything necessary to insure that the ensuing action will end in victory..."¹

The news that the sentence passed on the tsar had been carried out quickly spread throughout Western Europe and was enthusiastically greeted by the Russian emigrants in Paris and Geneva. The Russian revolutionaries were praised at socialist meetings in Paris dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the Paris Commune. Louise Michel, a heroine of the Commune, pronounced a toast in their honour on that day.

Meetings in New York and Chicago also expressed their support for the Russian revolutionaries. The revolutionaries of Poland responded to the participants of 1 March with profound encouragement.

And Kravchinsky joyfully greeted the news from St. Petersburg. In a few days' time he received the sum-

¹ M. G. Sedov, *Revolutionary Narodism's Heroic Period*, Moscow, 1966, p. 287 (in Russian).

mons from Russia: they were suggesting he return to his homeland. He ecstatically wrote to his wife: "Fenichka, my dear, I'm on my way!... I'm going where the battle is, where there are victims and maybe even death! God, if only you knew how pleased I am..., no, not pleased, but happy, happier than I ever thought I could be! Enough vegetating!... I feel a certain freshness, cheerfulness, as if I had got back 20 years that I had lost. Desire, a fire which had long ago gone out, has been rekindled; the desire for victories, sacrifices, even tortures. Yes! I would give everything for a single breath of fresh air, for a single ray of that sun which surrounds their heads. Yes, this is a bright holiday for me as well..."¹

But a few days later his friends postponed the return — there were new arrests in the country... It was, however, just as dangerous to stay in Switzerland as the tsarist government was negotiating Kravchinsky's extradition. It was then that he arrived in Milan on foot from Geneva...

That autumn in Milan was a melancholy and difficult one for Kravchinsky. His hopes for a trip to Russia went unrealised and he found himself completely alone in the Italian city, without work and unable to support himself. But things changed when the publisher of the Milan paper *Il Pungolo* asked him to write a series of articles on Russian revolutionary activists and their lives and work. Kravchinsky had to write about his contemporaries, friends, those who were in opposition to the forces of Russian despotism. As a result, stories began to appear about Yakov Stefanovich, Dmitry Klements, Valerian Ossinsky, Petr Kropotkin, Sofia Perovskaya and Vera Zasulich.

Such were the beginnings of the aforementioned *Underground Russia*, a book which helped Western Europe learn about the heroic deeds and selflessness of the Russian revolutionaries. The book was published in Milan, in Italian, on 19 May 1882. Kravchinsky immediately sent a copy to the well-known geographer

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 221 (in Russian).

and traveller Elisée Reclus in Switzerland. The latter responded by writing:

"My dear friend!

"I haven't finished reading your marvellous book yet because, as you know, I simply have no time. But that part which I've already read is enough to enable me to encourage you wholeheartedly. Yes, the book is extremely interesting and yes, you did the right thing in publishing it. It is very informative and it helps us avoid many erroneous conceptions. Yes, you should try to have it translated into French, German and English."¹

Printed responses to *Underground Russia* appeared in the Italian, English, French, German and Austrian papers. The reviews were mixed, both praising and abusing. After all, the topic was revolutionary activity. The reactionary Viennese paper *Neue Freie Presse* wrote that Stepniak's book "is a good source of information not only about various individuals, but about the party's work as a whole". But, later on, the author of the review offered the following arguments: "You have to doubt that the future of nihilism is so clear, that its victory over the government is so assured. You cannot guarantee the success of that movement which is based on such barbaric means... Since it is difficult to show a preference for one or another of the opposing sides, we'll express our opinions thusly: it's possible to see the Russian riddle in the following terms, that every nation gets the revolution it deserves."

One way or another *Underground Russia* got a wide distribution. Its two English editions appeared in 1883; the same year it came out in Stockholm, in Swedish. The following year saw a German edition in Bern. In 1885 the French version appeared, followed in 1886 by an edition in Holland.

But let us return to Russia.

The assassination of the tsar did not lead to the desired social upheaval. But this action on the part of the members of the People's Will did have an

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 245 (in Russian).

important significance. As Lenin wrote: "They displayed supreme self-sacrifice and astonished the whole world by the heroism of their terrorist methods of struggle. Their sacrifices were certainly not in vain. They doubtlessly contributed — directly or indirectly — to the subsequent revolutionary education of the Russian people. But they did not, and could not, achieve their immediate aim of generating a people's revolution."¹

Tsarism then went on the defensive. After 1 March, Sonia Gelfman, Timofei Mikhailov, Sofia Perovskaya, Nikolai Kibalchich, Mikhail Frolenko, Grigory Isayev and Nikolai Sukhanov were all arrested. A little later came the arrests of Anna Yakimova, Lebedeva and Martin Langans. And the "cream" of the People's Will found themselves in the cells of the Peter and Paul Fortress. The day of the trial was drawing closer and the accused were expecting a harsh sentence. Rysakov's testimony had betrayed the role of the revolutionaries in the assassination. Everything was made known about the parts played by Zhelyabov and Perovskaya, Gelfman, Kibalchich and Mikhailov. Their fates were sealed.

Perovskaya was given the opportunity to write to her mother on 22 March. Kravchinsky had access to the text of this letter when he was writing his *Underground Russia*. He referred to the letter as a "priceless document" and in 1882 introduced it to his Italian readers. The following is an excerpt from that letter.

"My dear, priceless Mama! I am oppressed and tormented by the thought of what is happening to you. My dear, I implore you, be calm, don't torture yourself because of me. Take care of yourself, not only for me, but for those others who also need you. I am not at all grieved by my fate. I go to meet it with an absolute calm since I have known for so long, and have been expecting that sooner or later things would end up this way. And really, my dear mama, it's not that bad. I lived as my convictions dictated I should; I could not have acted

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1981, pp. 242-43.

against them. Therefore, it is with a calm and clear conscience that I now await that which is facing me. And the only thing that weighs heavily on me is your grief, my dearest. That is the only thing that eats away at me and I would give anything to ease your burden. My little dove, Mama, remember that you still have a huge family, the young ones and older ones as well who need you as their great moral support..."¹

Kibalchich's cell was right next to Perovskaya's. This technical mastermind of the organisation who had prepared the bombs was now busy with other things. He was not wasting his time: he was musing on how the energy given off by the gasses during an explosion could be used in prolonged flight. He had long been interested in a "plan for an aeronautic device", ideas had come and gone but then it had been impossible to concentrate. Now the opportunity had arrived; he had the time and the necessary peace and quiet. His brain feverishly set to work, but he had no paper and was forced to record his thoughts on the wall. Finally the condemned man was given paper and pen. Yes, there was the basic principle and soon a draft appeared, a suggestion for the general idea. That, about which Jules Verne had only dreamed was realisable: a rocket which could reach outer space. But this was only the beginning; to work the idea out further Kibalchich needed to perform experiments; he needed time and that was what he didn't have. What could he do? He then decided to turn to the authorities. "While here in prison," he wrote, "I am working on this idea just days before my execution. I believe that my idea can be realised, and this belief is what keeps me going during my most difficult hours. If my idea can be proved feasible after being examined by scientific experts, then I will be happy that I have been able to be of service to my homeland and mankind. I will then be able to meet my end peacefully, knowing that my idea will not perish with me. I will

¹ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Works*, in two volumes, Vol. I, pp. 458-59 (in Russian).

be happy to know that it will be realised by mankind, for whom I am prepared to sacrifice my life. Therefore, I beg you scientists who will be examining my plan, please treat it as seriously and as conscientiously as you can and give me an answer as quickly as possible.”¹

The condemned man's last request remained unfulfilled. Kibalchich's plan was never shown to the scientists and was simply filed away with the other documents relating to the 1 March case.

The trial of the participants of 1 March went on for four days. On 29 March, the death sentence was passed on all of the defendants.

One day in the spring, at 7 o'clock in the morning, a government decree appeared on the streets of St. Petersburg: "Today, 3 April, at 9:00 a. m. the death sentence by hanging will be carried out on the following criminals: the noblewoman Sofia Perovskaya, the priest's son Nikolai Kibalchich, the petty bourgeois Nikolai Rysakov, the peasants Andrei Zhelyabov and Timofei Mikhailov. As for the criminal Sonia Gelfman, a petty bourgeois, who is currently pregnant, her execution will be postponed, by law, until she has given birth."

When the inhabitants of St. Petersburg were reading this notice the defendants were already on their way to their execution. Two black wagons carrying the condemned pulled out of the gates of the prison, surrounded by a convoy. Each of the condemned was wearing a black placard on their chests which read: "Regicide". The tattoo of the drums drowned out all other noises. The Semyonovsky parade ground, then the scaffold and the black coffins...

After 1 March the Russian revolutionaries began to analyse the results of the activities of the People's Will, to ponder the nature and character of their work and the structure of revolutionary party. This kind of process was taking place not only in Russia, but abroad as well. Kravchinsky was also engaged in this analysis and called for local groups to increase their own activities. He also called for the development

¹ *Byloye* (The Past), 1918, Nos. 4-5, p. 115 (in Russian).

of individual initiative and for unrestricted criticism within the party. "I am completely against a Christian-like humility," he wrote to the members of the People's Will. "To hell with it! A revolutionary must be proud like Lucifer and he should believe in the greatness of his party and of his own vocation. Therein lies the secrets of his might. And this fear of any kind of criticism, this trembling that any word pronounced against you will destroy your authority — what kind of might is this? Is this a sign that you believe in yourself and your party?"¹

The Fight for a Free Russia

On 2 June 1882 Giuseppe Garibaldi died. Kravchinsky had always been taken by this national hero of Italy, knew a lot about him from literature, from eyewitness accounts and from the songs and legends about this marvellous individual. And so Kravchinsky decided to tell the story to his Russian readers. On the pages of *Russky Kourier* (The Russian Courier) there appeared the following feature story: "Garibaldi has died and all of Italy is in mourning. Entertainment and festivities have come to an end, the theatres are closed, the stores shut tight; classes have been suspended in the schools and universities and every house has been hung with the tricolour flag, tied with a black band. Announcements hang on every house, in every shop window and every cafe, announcements consisting of just two words: 'national mourning'. 'Our Garibaldi is dead,' the words pass from mouth to mouth and an anxious flow of people moves in chaotic disorder through the streets in the same way as they move during days of social unrest or military defeat."²

Kravchinsky also responded to another sad event. During the night of 25 April, the well-known revolutionary Sofia Bardina committed suicide in a Geneva hospital.

¹ E. Taratuta, "Underground Russia". *The Fate of S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky's, Book*, Moscow, 1967, p. 87 (in Russian).

² E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 261.

Kravchinsky immediately took pen in hand and wrote a sketch about her which was then published in Geneva. He told about this courageous woman, about her life in emigration and how, after returning to Russia, she was engaged in propaganda work amongst Moscow factory workers. In 1875 Bardina was arrested and spent more than two years in solitary confinement in pre-trial imprisonment. Then came her trial and the dazzling speech given by this pale and seemingly weak young woman which resounded with a strong conviction in the legitimacy of her socialist beliefs.

The following is a quotation from Bardina's speech which Kravchinsky used in his sketch: "But I am neither asking for mercy from you, nor do I desire it... I am convinced that the day will come when our sleepy and lazy society will awaken and will be ashamed of the fact that it allowed itself to be so unlawfully trampled upon for so long and to have its own brothers and sisters, sons and daughters torn out and destroyed simply for the free expression of their own beliefs! And then it will avenge itself and our destruction!... Go ahead, persecute us; you, sirs, have a material might, but we have a moral power, the force of historical progress, of ideas, ideas which won't be caught up on bayonets!..."¹

These words, pronounced by this young woman, caused a sensation. But it was Bardina's last political statement, her swan song, as Kravchinsky described it. She was sentenced to nine years of forced labour which was commuted to eternal exile in Siberia. At the end of 1880 Bardina escaped from exile, but once free she realised that she did not have the strength to continue the fight. Then, what could be the reason for living? "So," wrote Kravchinsky, "filled with a sense of horror and despair, she grabbed her head, covered in a cold sweat, and pronounced the following sentence on herself: I am a broken person, no longer good for anything..."²

¹ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Works*, in two volumes, Vol. I, p. 566 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 569.

And yet one more sad bit of news. Kravchinsky found out that in the beginning of 1884 Dmitry Rogachev had died in the prison camps and that in that same year Rogachev's younger brother Nikolai, an officer and a member of the People's Will, had been hanged in the Shlisselburg Fortress. Kravchinsky immediately decided to tell the story of these courageous men in a sketch, written in English and entitled "Two Brothers". "They had a single love," wrote Kravchinsky "to which they devoted their dreams and every bit of their heart. Only this lady of their life was not a woman. It was the liberty of their unhappy country. ...It was in her name that they fought and gained many a glorious battle. It was with her name on the lips that both died..."¹

With each passing day Kravchinsky's situation in Geneva was becoming more and more dangerous. P. I. Rachkovsky who was in charge of the Russian police agents abroad, was making every effort to arrest the Russian emigrant. Kravchinsky had to flee from Geneva to Paris and then to London. On 5 July 1884 he rented a room in London and set to work. He was completely taken by the Reading Room of the British Museum. He had at his disposal complete sets of the journals *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (Fatherland Notes), *Vestnik Yevropy* (European Messenger), *Russky Vestnik* (Russian Messenger), *Russkaya Starina* (Russian Antiquity) and other journals which he needed for his work. What else could a publicist possessed need?

Visits to friends and acquaintances began and it was even necessary to order calling cards. On 16 July Kravchinsky had an invitation to visit Engels. The next day he wrote to his wife: "I left for Engels's house at 8 o'clock in the evening wearing my gloves, but without undue ceremony. I had just rung the bell and was extending my calling card when a rather tall, dark and dishevelled young woman [Marx's daughter Eleanor — B. I.] threw herself, in true nihilist fashion, at me: 'Are you Stepniak? Stepniak, right?'

¹ B. Itenberg, *Dmitry Rogachev, a Revolutionary Narodnik*, Moscow, 1960, p. 71 (in Russian).

I bowed respectfully in affirmation: 'Let me introduce myself...' Engels is very intelligent and incredibly educated. You should hear him speak French! And imagine this: he even understands the Milan dialect! Thirty years ago he was in Milan for three months and hasn't forgotten the dialect! He's so intelligent!"¹

Of course Stepniak also made trips to Hyde Park, the scene of mass demonstrations. During one of these demonstrations he met the then young playwright George Bernard Shaw. The latter recalled how Stepniak had been amazed by all that he saw: the police made no attempts to break up the demonstrations, did not silence those giving speeches and did not arrest those who were distributing leaflets. Yes, this wasn't autocratic Russia! Stepniak and Shaw became good friends and the Russian, with his spontaneity, made a strong impression on the British playwright. When he first met him in the park, Shaw recalled, he couldn't completely appreciate the genuineness and originality of his charm. You could hardly say that all Russian are possessed of a disarming character; but, it goes without saying that all the Russian revolutionaries that he had met had been extremely pleasant acquaintances.²

While in England Stepniak met the leading labour and union activists John Burns, Edward Pease and others.

All the same, his publicistic writing, documentary in nature and clearly written, which revealed both the history of Russia and its situation at that time, was becoming one of life's most important tasks: the West had to learn about Russian reality, to understand those reasons which caused the revolutionaries to take up arms. Stepniak's books were published in English one after another: *Russia Under the Tsars* (1885); *Russian Storm-Cloud* (1886) and *The Russian Peasantry* (1888).

¹ *Russian Contemporaries about Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 207-08 (in Russian).

² See *Russkaya Literatura* (Russian Literature), No. 1, 1967, p. 166; *Tomorrow*, February 1896. B. Shaw's obituary for Stepniak.

Kravchinsky's first novel *Andrei Kozhukhov* came out in London in November 1889. In its English translation it was known as *The Career of a Nihilist* and bore the author's pen name: "S. Stepniak". It was a novel which captured the public's attention with its stories of Russian revolutionaries who were fighting against the autocracy. Reviews began to appear and *The Star* wrote that Stepniak had shown them to be unusual people, highly cultured young men and women. The "sword of Damocles" hung over their heads. Living every hour with that sense, but looking death calmly in the eye, helped to strengthen these bonds of fidelity between them. They lived each day as if it would be their last. People such as these, illustrated by the hand of a master, could touch the soul of even the most indifferent reader.

Professor Karl Pearson, a well-known English scholar, also wrote a response to the novel: "One may, idly, perhaps as an outside critic, question whether the great expenditure of fine life was always or even ordinarily well-directed, but one cannot doubt that the feeling of absolute trust in each other, the complete self-negation, which you paint so vividly among the conspirators, was a real gain in human power. It raised men and women in their mutual relationship to a higher standard than they probably have ever reached elsewhere or at another time..."¹

More and more Western Europeans were showing a certain sense of sympathy towards the Russian revolutionaries in their fight against the tsarist regime. And this was especially visible in England. Kravchinsky's service to the cause lay in the fact that his works helped attract the attention of the public abroad to the cause of revolutionary Russia, and to give the Western reader a correct sense of the nature of the events taking place in a country under the yoke of despotism.

On 18 December 1889, in one of London's fashionable restaurants, the British social activist Robert

¹ S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Emigration in London*, Moscow, 1968, p. 265 (in Russian); Central State Archives of Literature and Art, fund 1158, inventory 1, file 387, sheet 14.

Spence Watson met with Stepniak-Kravchinsky and Petr Kropotkin at his own request. They were joined by John Falk, the owner of a number of salt factories and a man sympathetic towards the cause of the Russian revolutionaries. As a result of this meeting the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom was formed. Stepniak took an active part in the Society, using his speeches and publications to forcefully prove that the struggle against the Russian autocracy had an international character. The English radical intelligentsia rose to this call, and money began to pour in. The Society took its final shape in April of 1890 and in May it was decided to publish a newspaper called *Free Russia*. Robert Spence Watson was chosen as the Society's chairman at the first meeting. The society's most active members included social activists, MPs, the editors of influential newspapers and men of letters.

Kravchinsky was becoming more and more interested in social activity which was directed against the Russian autocratic system and against the oppressors of the working masses in Western Europe. On 4 May 1890 a mass demonstration took place in London, in Hyde Park. And not only were Frederick Engels, Paul Lafargue, Edward Aveling and Bernard Shaw amongst those on the dais, but Stepniak was there as well. The latter gave a speech in which he said that the workers of his homeland were in complete solidarity with the British proletariat.

Kravchinsky was more concerned at this time with preparing the first issue of *Free Russia* for print. And he was forced to write it almost entirely by himself. But an even more pressing problem was that of a lack of money. It was then decided to set off for America with the hopes of finding new friends for the Russian revolutionary cause.

On 30 December 1890, Kravchinsky, together with his wife, arrived in New York. He lost not a minute and set immediately to work, delivering lectures in Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington, Buffalo and other cities. His talks were varied and centred around the nihilists, Siberian exile, Lev Tolstoi, Ivan Turgenev and Russian women who had sacrificed

themselves to the cause. Not all the talks were equally successful, but they did manage to rouse opinion and to strengthen the sympathies of progressive Americans towards the revolutionaries in Russia.

Kravchinsky's acquaintance with Mark Twain was of particular significance and he presented the American author with a copy of his *Underground Russia*. The latter responded with a warm letter of thanks: "I have read *Underground Russia* through with profound and painful interest. What sublime men and women! Nothing milder than Russian despotism could breed such, I suppose. Voluntary age-long suffering and final death for the exclusive benefit of *other people* is a sort of martyrdom which no country but Russia has ever seen, I suppose."¹

Having established the necessary contacts Kravchinsky set about organising a Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom in America. The Society's organisational committee approved an appeal to the American people, the friends of Russian freedom. And the results were quickly visible: money began to pour in in support of the publication of *Free Russia* and for aid to the revolutionaries who were in Siberian exile.

Soon it was time to return to England. The trip to America had been a success; many Americans had shown a certain sympathy towards the Russian revolutionaries. Quite a bit of money had been collected which would be used to further the cause of Russian freedom.

Kravchinsky arrived in England in June of 1891. There were meetings, talks about America and the Russian Free Press Fund was set up. Rachkovsky didn't miss a minute of all this excitement and on 21 June 1891 he informed the Department of Police: "Stepniak-Kravchinsky, having returned to London from America where he gave lectures on Russia and the Russian revolutionary movement, has enchanted his friends with exaggerated stories about how he was

¹ Mark Twain, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, Moscow, 1961, pp. 613-14 (in Russian); Central State Archives of Literature and Art, fund 1158, inventory 1, file 445, sheet 1-2.

received, about American sympathies towards the Russian revolutionaries and about the extraordinarily convenient conditions for setting up revolutionary organisations..."¹

Kravchinsky continued to write; his publicistic talent was becoming more developed and he was concerned with helping the foreign reader understand the Russian people and revealing the despotism of the tsarist autocracy. Alexander III had died and Nikolai II had ascended to the throne. Interested parties in England wanted to know how this change in monarchs would affect both Russia's foreign and domestic policies. Kravchinsky himself had thought about this as well: "Could we possibly hope," he wrote, "that the new monarch will bring some sort of change to Russia? Will the young tsar begin to introduce liberal reforms? Are such reforms even possible? Has Russia matured enough for political freedom? Does the tsar have the power to grant the country a constitution, if he wanted to?"²

No, he was not just posing these questions; the publicist was trying to answer them. In his address to the English nation he tried to convince them that the future belongs to those who fight against despotism and that only by overthrowing the monarchy will the way be opened for Russia's full prosperity.

...Engels died on 5 August 1895 and on 10 August his friends gathered in the waiting room of the Waterloo Station to bid him a farewell on his final journey. And Kravchinsky was among those in attendance. The train was on its way to the Woking crematorium.

But who could have imagined that less than a half a year later this same station would be the scene of Kravchinsky's own farewell?

But that is exactly what happened. On 23 December at 10 o'clock in the morning Kravchinsky set out to visit his emigrant friends: they were going to finally decide the fate of the newspaper *Zemsky sobor* (Na-

¹ E. Taratuta, *Sergei Mikhailovich Stepniak-Kravchinsky: Revolutionary and Writer*, p. 461 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 516-17.

tional Assembly). It was foggy that day in London. Kravchinsky was in a hurry and while crossing the railroad tracks he failed to see the train that had suddenly appeared from around the corner...

The British papers expressed their profound respect for the Russian exile. John Burns, a leader of the British proletariat and a member of Parliament took on the responsibility of organising the funeral. On 28 December thousands passed by the bier with wreaths and red banners. These were people from all walks of life, of varied views and convictions. Elisée Reclus arrived from Switzerland; Keir Hardie, a leading labour activist, came from Scotland. Spence Watson, from the Society of the Friends of Russian Freedom, and Eduard Bernstein, representing the German Social-Democratic Party, gave eulogies as did Enrico Malatesta representing the Italian revolutionaries, Petr Kropotkin for the Russians and Eleanor Marx for the women.

John Burns said in his eulogy that he had been friends with Kravchinsky a few years and had had the benefit of his good advice. He knew him as a good and true friend of all the oppressed peoples. Kravchinsky, according to Burns, had the heart of a lion and the simplicity of a child. This was a magnanimous man and a great individual in the European revolutionary movement.¹

...The Danish critic Georg Brandes had once asked Kravchinsky for an autograph for his daughter Edith. The request was granted: "Be true to yourself and you will never know the pangs of conscience which are the only true misfortune in our lives."² Kravchinsky himself always remained true to himself, his conscience was always clear and he was forever a courageous and honourable citizen of Russia who gave all he could to the struggle to free his country from the tyranny of autocracy.

¹ See: S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky, *Selected Works*, p. 3 (in Russian).

² Georg Brandes, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 9 Band, Albert Langen, Verlag für Literatur und Kunst, München, 1906, p. 342.

**PETR LAVROV,
A MAN RESPECTED BY ALL EUROPEAN
SOCIALISTS**

Petr Lavrovich Lavrov was waiting, high-strung, as the train approached the border: gendarmes could appear any minute. The train arrived in Eidkunen, at last, and German customs officials inspected his baggage. His next train, a Prussian one, was to depart in an hour. Lavrov was at his ease, now — the border had been crossed and he, a former convict, was out of reach for the tsarist authorities.

He looked through the window at the German landscape: the tiled gabled roofs were covered with patches of snow, the tidy towns and good roads were lined by trees. In Berlin, he took the Magdeburg-Cologne train. Soon he was in long-awaited France.

Lavrov arrived in Paris on 13 March 1870. Though the uncertainty of his future life abroad worried him, he was elated at being in the capital of the world, as Paris was called then, and at the opportunities to do his research.

In Paris he was stunned by its broad boulevards, long rows of shops, and Gothic architecture, a multitude of carriages in the Champs-Élysées, and people talking noisily, as they were hurrying along the streets, dressed with good taste, especially women, whose dresses were elegant and simple. He watched the fascinating panorama of the city from the tower of the Notre-Dame de Paris; the Luxembourg Palace, the Central Market, the Opéra, the majestic Panthéon, the Place de la Concorde, Sorbonne, and the Sainte-Geneviève Library...

During his first days in Paris Lavrov paid a visit to Georgi Vyrubov, a rich Russian gentleman, a "legal emigrant" and a positivist philosopher. Vyrubov recalled later: "At the end of March 1870 I was visited by a tall, stout and very awkward man. He had long uncombed hair and a large yellow beard and was incredibly near-sighted. That was Petr Lavrov, a former professor of higher mathematics and a retired artillery colonel." The guest talked about Alexander Herzen and his works and said it was necessary to write his biography. Lavrov wrote about his idea to Herzen's daughter Natalya.

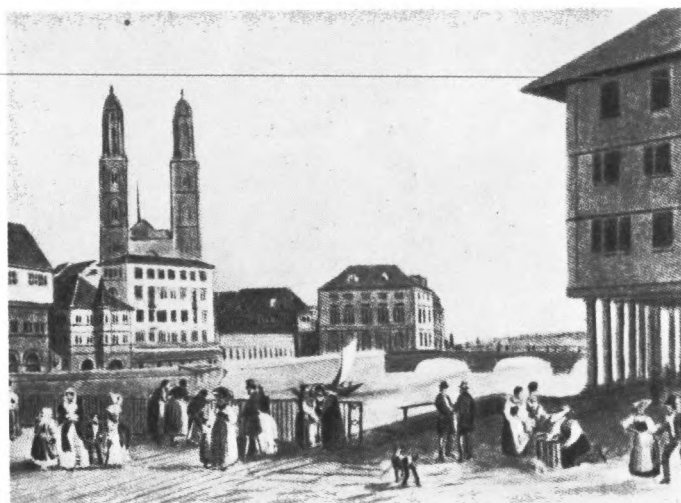
He met also with Vladimir Luginin, his former student at the Artillery Academy. Luginin was now deeply occupied with chemical studies, was rich, and had a French wife. His radical views had grown notably blunted, but he remained an honest man. One could talk with him about everyday needs and discuss various publication projects (which Lavrov was eager about). Luginin was going to help carry out an ambitious plan of publishing in St. Petersburg a three-volume *History of European Thought in the New Time* and issuing an encyclopaedic dictionary in 12 to 15 volumes.

After some time in Paris, Lavrov resumed his scientific studies. On 21 April 1870, he became a full member of the Paris Anthropological Society. His instructor was Paul Borca, one of the founding fathers of anthropology, who had discovered the motor speech centre in the cerebral cortex. Lavrov had read his works back in Russia and wrote a comment on them in the *Zagranichny Vestnik* (News from Abroad). Now he enjoyed his meetings with the famous scientist.

Lavrov went to various libraries, but far from always could he find a book he wanted for his studies. Almost in each letter to Yelena Shtakenshneider, his St. Petersburg friend, he asked her to see to it that his manuscripts and books be duly delivered. Some time later, Borca, who appreciated the scientific knowledge of the Russian refugee, asked him to make reviews of Russian and German literature on anthropology as an editor of the journal *Revue d'Anthropologie*.



Petr Lavrov. Portrait



The Declaration of the Republic
in Paris, 4 September 1870.
Contemporary engraving
Zurich. Second half of the 19th
century



Petr Lavrov. Photograph. 1860s



Lavrov's grave in the
Montparnasse Cemetery, Paris

Late in April, Lavrov was happy to meet Lopatin, who had arrived from Russia. Indefatigable Lopatin could not sit idle. He soon joined the International, then left for Switzerland to meet Bakunin, after his return to Paris he went to London, and then back to Paris. Lopatin seemed to infect Lavrov with energy.

In May, Lavrov waited for his mother's arrival. She had not wanted to part with her youngest son. His mother, 82 years old, had lived with him in the hard conditions of exile in Russia and decided to follow him in emigration. All attempts to dissuade her from doing that had been of no avail. Having obtained a passport for her, Lavrov's elder son Mikhail took the old woman to Paris. But she did not live long with her beloved son and died on 1 June. The funerals drained the meagre budget of the refugee. He had to save every franc, stinting himself in everything, and moved to a cheaper flat.

Used to be comfortably off, he found himself deprived of most necessary things. His publications were the main source of income. The Russian publishers sent him his money irregularly. Sometimes he received small sums from his children, but that was not enough. Yelena Shtakenschnaider, aware of his privations, sent him money with somebody travelling to Paris. "I hate to realise that now I experience the bitterest side of a refugee's life, a life of miserable pittance when I can work and want to,"¹ he wrote to her. During her stay in Heidelberg early in July, she spent two days in Paris. She told him about the life in St. Petersburg, and about new publications in Russia.

Dining in cheap cafes, Lavrov would start a conversation with a Frenchman, and sometimes with a Spaniard, a Fleming, or a Black man, and would drink with them "to the fraternity of nations", as he put it.

Gradually Lavrov was getting used to the new situation. And still he felt uneasy. Once when he returned home on an August night, he saw his rooms

¹ *Golos minuvshogo* (The Voice of the Past), 1916, No. 7-8, p. 122 (in Russian).

in disorder: a map was removed from the wall, the books were displaced, and the desk drawers were all pulled out. In the morning the concierge told him that his flat had been visited by a police commissar. Were the police tipped off by the Russian government?

And another thing was worrying him: the moral aspect of his flight abroad. It was believed among revolutionaries that any honest man should act in his own country: to fight against autocratic despotism for the rights of the dispossessed. Emigration was sometimes regarded as flight from a battlefield. In a letter from his elder son this delicate question was touched upon one way or another.

In a letter dated 5 August Lavrov wrote to his son Mikhail: "It is hard, indeed, to break ties with the homeland, even if temporarily, and those who can be useful for it at home, maintaining formal ties with it, should preserve these ties. It was very painful for me to emigrate, and I don't advise anyone to do this unless there is no other way. Only when all possible ways for useful activities in the homeland are cut, only then can emigration be excused or obligatory. All the ways are blocked for me." Lavrov assured him that he remained "Russian in my heart", that he was not going to change his citizenship, and would struggle as much as he could for the victory of a just social system in Russia. The father's last commandment was: "I wish you with all my heart to be able to serve Russia within its bounds all your life with the love that I preserve here."¹

Meanwhile the French empire lived through hard times. Dissatisfaction with the regime was mounting. Lavrov watched the development with interest. The press, public meetings, and the activities of the sections of the International gave him much food for thought.

On 19 July, France declared a war on Prussia. The very first days of the hostilities showed that the government which had wanted the war so much was unprepared for it. The Prussian Army quickly crossed the border and, having superiority in numerical

¹ *Materials for a Biography of Petr Lavrov*, Petrograd, 1921, pp. 38-39 (in Russian).

strength and artillery and better organisation, was winning one victory after another. In the battle of Sedan, 83,000 French troops with the emperor at the head were taken prisoner.

It soon became obvious that Paris faced the threat of a siege.

Lavrov was indignant at the French radicals' indecision. He wrote to Lopatin on 29 August: "I am beginning to believe that with these milksops the empire may stay on even after the defeat. They all indulge in idle talk, ... when the possibility of an overturn looked so evident..."¹ Lavrov hit the nail right on the head: a few days later, on 4 September, France was declared a republic.

This is how it all happened. At night on 3 September, an official report on the surrender near Sedan was made public in Paris. That set off a tide of popular indignation. Workers, craftsmen, soldiers, national guards, and students staged large demonstrations of protest. Crowds headed for the Bourbon Palace and Louvre, crying out: "Dethronement! Long live the Republic!" On the next day public unrest increased. A session of the Legislative Corps opened at the Bourbon Palace at 1:15 a. m. Half an hour later, people broke into the palace, occupied the staircases and rushed to the stands for the public. A red flag was hoisted over the town hall seized by the people.

But, as it had often been the case in similar circumstances, experienced political operators acted behind the people's backs. It is they who formed the provisional government of bourgeois republicans and monarchists and on 4 September declared themselves a Government of National Defence.

Lavrov wrote to Shtakenshnaider: "I was on the Place de la Concorde and on the steps of the Legislative Corps leading into a new 'grand day', and shouted together with the others *Vive la République!*, and saw how the eagles of the empire were thrown down."²

¹ Lavrov — *Years of Emigration*, Ed. by Boris Sapir, Vol. I: *Lavrov and Lopatin (Correspondence 1870-1883)*, D. Reidel Publishing Co., Dordrecht-Holland, 1974, p. 37 (The text of the letter is in Russian).

² *Golos minuvshego*, 1916, Nos. 7-8, p. 114.

Right after the events he set to writing an article, "French Democrats and the Fall of the Second Empire". The unfinished manuscript has been preserved in the archives. One will find it interesting to read Lavrov's thoughts about the events in France at that time. There existed a military state: "its generals have vanished; its arsenals are empty; and its sovereign is in captivity." There had been a government and "one morning it collapsed and not a single man rose to its defence". The former glory of the French Empire was "drowned in the blood of hundreds of thousands of killed soldiers", in the inept actions of its generals and contempt for Bonapartism. So where was the way out? "If France is saved, its salvation will be due to the people's armament and not to the mechanically organised army."¹ Petr Lavrov pinned great hopes on the people. And what happened in effect?

The revolution was accomplished by the working people of Paris, but the bourgeois republicans came to power. Further struggle was ahead, and one had clearly to determine one's place in it.

Bookbinder Louis Eugène Varlin, one of the International leaders in France, introduced Lavrov to the section Ternes of Paris (district Batignolles) of the International Working Men's Association. So Lavrov became a member of the International, which made practical action obligatory for him.

On 15 January 1871, Lavrov began to write a leaflet entitled "Action!" (it was not published then).

"Action, workers! Brothers in the International, action! Action now!

"Act to establish truth and justice.

"Act to establish fraternity of all working people on earth.

"Act to fight all parasites of society to the last one, all who exploit the labour of others."

Lavrov wrote that all the oppressed and disinherited should unite to build a republic of working people. That would require resolute, revolutionary actions. They would not do without violence and sacrifices,

¹ *Central State Archives of the October Revolution*, fund of P. L. Lavrov, fund 1762, inventory 2, file 273, sheets 3-4.

but such sacrifices and such violence were morally justified: "Should one pity the tyrants and the unjust who will be destroyed? Can one speak of the greatness of a loss when it concerns the rights of millions, when innumerable generations are to be guaranteed an opportunity to develop their abilities and preserve human dignity?"¹

At that time ex-colonel Lavrov, Russian nobleman, and a member of the International Working Men's Association, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Science of Workers*. In it he described everything in detail, as he would usually do. His plans were great, indeed: to publish fifteen series of popular books giving systematised knowledge about nature, human society, and history. The books were intended for the International members. The idea was that, when the workers would master science, their victory would be certain, since they would have numerical superiority and a just goal. Science would enable them to see by what means they would reach this goal and how they would use their energies. Yet another idea ardently advocated by Lavrov as a theoretician was that victory was impossible if the masses of revolutionaries remained uneducated. If people preparing to win power ignore science, they may lose. The workers need sound knowledge — this is indispensable for a success of social change.

In November 1870 hunger was spreading in besieged Paris: the stock of beef and mutton had run out; beginning with 15 December, a man's daily ration consisted of 30 grammes of horseflesh and 300 grammes of bread made of rye mixed with oats. Lavrov had a hard time then. Recalling those days, he wrote that he ate "a small piece of a horse" once in two days and on one occasion he had to eat a "dog cutlet". There was no firewood.

On 17 February 1871, the National Assembly proclaimed Louis Adolphe Thiers the head of the new government comprising members of monarchic groups for the most part. On 16 March, Thiers arrived from

¹ *Istoria SSSR* (A History of the USSR), 1971, No. 2, pp. 90, 94.

Versailles to Paris. A day later the Council of Ministers approved a plan of crushing the revolutionary forces of Paris. At night on 18 March, Thiers' troops were sent to the hills of Montmartre and Belleville where cannons were emplaced; the cannons were guarded by the battalions loyal to the National Guards Central Committee.

Lavrov woke up early in the morning. He dressed himself quickly and left. The situation outside was disturbing. Thiers' troops marched through the Place de Clichy. As they reached Montmartre and Belleville, they disarmed the guards and captured the artillery depots. The awoken Montmartre dwellers raised the alarm. The National Guards were coming together. Women, children and old men went out into the streets. The crowd surrounded the troops, and fraternisation began. The spontaneous drive of the masses was irresistible. Soon barricades were put up. The people were taking up arms. The government plan fell through.

On 18 March, Lavrov was on the Place de Clichy, watching the retreat of demoralised government troops. The National Guards Central Committee sent troops to seize the government buildings. Thiers realised that his game was lost. He left the Foreign Ministry in panic, jumped into a coach and rode to Versailles. His retinue followed him. Late that afternoon Paris was controlled by the proletariat.

On the sunny morning of 28 March, people rushed to the Town Hall in the Place de Grève. Lavrov went there, too. The popular triumph he saw there was unforgettable. Battalions marched into the square with music. They played "Marseillaise", and the song was caught up with numerous voices. Guns thundered. There was a sea of banners, bayonets, hats, and flowers. Scene painter Gabriel Ranvier, a member of the National Guards Central Committee, addressed the people: "In the name of the people the Commune has been proclaimed!" The crowd responded: "Long live the Republic! Long live the Commune!" The Commune was proclaimed, and the proletariat took state power into its own hands for the first time in history.

Lavrov drew up a new plan. *The Science of*

Workers was to become just an element of changing entire public education. To fulfil the plan, Lavrov decided to address a series of letters to the citizens of the Paris Commune. The first letter read: "Citizens, I am a foreigner in France, but I am a member of the International and fully sympathise with the social movement represented by the Paris Commune. I have spent my life studying, teaching and spreading scientific knowledge, and therefore I will allow myself to express in this appeal to you some considerations on education which you are to improve."¹

Lavrov's far-reaching plan was never fulfilled. And only the manuscripts preserved in the archives give us the idea of the interesting suggestions he had offered to the first proletarian state. However, there was no one to fulfill such plans at that time: the Communards mustered up all their forces to defend Paris from the counter-revolutionary troops of the Thiers government.

A new idea occurred then to the Russian refugee: to leave France and appeal to the European public, above all to the General Council of the International, for help to the Commune. Lavrov informed Louis Eugène Varlin about his idea, received a passport from the Commune, and left Paris in mid-April. On his way Lavrov was detained. The Versailles patrol were prepared to let the foreigner pass, but grew suspicious about his passport being signed by the "rebels". Lavrov asked them then: "Am I to blame that the 'legitimate government' had fled Paris?" The argument worked, and he was allowed to leave the besieged capital.

In Brussels he met with members of the Belgian Federal Council of the International (later he became very friendly with César de Paepe, one of the Council's leaders) to persuade them to organise a workers' demonstration in support for revolutionary Paris.

From Brussels Lavrov went to London to meet Karl Marx. Lavrov had addressed Marx once before. On 20 November 1870, Lavrov had received a letter from

¹ *Istoria SSSR*, 1971, No 2, p. 104.

Lopatin who wrote from London: "Dear Petr Lavrovich, the circumstances compel me to leave Europe. Should there be any access to you, I would have called on you in Paris to talk over my problems with you, but I find it not very proper to write about this... I shall come back in five or six months and then, of course, I will try to find your address or yourself immediately. Good-bye. Good health to you, and be happy." Months passed, but there was no news from Lopatin. Knowing that Lopatin and Marx were on friendly terms, Lavrov ventured to write to London. His letter to Marx, dated 27 February 1871, has not been preserved, but the reply to it is known:

"Dear Sir,

"Lopatin has left for the United States, and I still have no word from him. Faithfully yours, Karl Marx."¹

In effect, Lopatin had left for Siberia, to save Chernyshevsky from banishment, but Marx could not write about that, of course. That was a secret. Thus the first exchange of letters between Lavrov and Marx occurred.

Now their personal meeting was to take place. The letter written by César de Paepe to Karl Marx, which Lavrov carried with him, said that the Belgian Federal Council had taken upon itself a subscription in favour of the Paris workers. Other countries should follow suit. The letter ended with a recommendation: "I am sending to you this letter through one of our good friends, a member of the Paris section of Ternes — citizen Lavrov, a man whose character, vast knowledge and great loyalty to the International in particular, and to social progress in general, we appreciated during his stay in Belgium."²

Probably Lavrov handed in this letter to Marx late in April. He had his first conversations with Marx and Engels about the Commune and the situation in Paris. On 4, 11 and 18 July, Lavrov attended meetings of

¹ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, S. 185.

² *The First International in the Days of the Paris Commune. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1941, p. 195 (in Russian).

the General Council of the International and heard speeches by Marx and Engels.

Since the first day of the Commune Lavrov sought to grasp the meaning of that social change. At that time, on 21 March, he published an article in the Brussels newspaper *L'Internationale*, in which he wrote that the role of the chief revolutionary in the Paris Commune was played by ordinary workers. Lavrov was on their side. His great wish was that the republic, which really had emerged from among the people and was founded by workers who wanted only justice and fraternity, should win.¹ After the elections to the Council of the Commune, Lavrov wrote another article, greeting the new collective government. The Central Committee of the National Guard, he wrote, having renounced dictatorial power in favour of the elected Commune, has thus honestly fulfilled its moral duty. So the principles of social justice were endorsed, and now Paris had the right to enjoy the sincere sympathy of all the true friends of progress, especially of socialists in all countries.

Lavrov set forth his impressions of the Paris Commune in his letters to Yelena Shtakenshneider.

Paris, 21 March 1871: "I am not sure if I wrote you from Brussels that, in my view, the first party which would represent itself by clever and energetic persons will be able to take control of Paris easily, only if these persons venture to seize power... This idea has been justified and, luckily, the first party that produced such persons was the *actual* people, the workers, the only healthy and reliable class in this rotten society. All the loud names in France have compromised themselves and are not trusted."²

Paris, 30 March: "The present government in Paris is more honest and clever than any other that was before it in this century, but it is confronted with an immense opposition, with routine and offended pride."

London, 5 May: "The struggle being waged by

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1934, pp. 451-52 (in Russian).

² *Golos minuvshego*, 1916, Nos. 7-8, p. 121.

Paris at the moment is a historic struggle, and now Paris is, indeed, in the front ranks of mankind. Should it defend itself, this would advance history considerably, but even if it falls and reaction triumphs, the ideas proclaimed by a few unknown persons who come from among the people, the real people who have emerged at the head of government, these ideas will not die.”¹

Paris failed to hold out. The Versailles troops were capturing one district after another; over 30,000 Communards were shot without trial. The last battles were fought at the Père-Lachaise cemetery. Groups of brave people fought courageously among graves and vaults. It was there that the last defenders of the revolution were shot at the tall white wall facing the Peace Street. They cried, “Long Live the Commune!” before they died.

Lavrov learned these details from the papers, from Marx and Engels, from the Communards who had escaped from Paris.

His stay in London did not remain a secret to the tsarist government. Early in June 1871, A. Y. Balashevich-Pototsky, an agent and provocateur of the Third Section who owned a curiosity shop opposite the British Museum, got acquainted with Lavrov, making him interested in his business contacts. He began to send detailed reports to the Third Section. The first report, dated 2 June, midnight, said: “Colonel Lavrov has arrived here from Paris and we dined today together at the hotel.” Another report, dated 24 July 1871, said: “Lavrov left for Paris on 24 July, where he intends to spend three months to support an organisation of the International and the correspondence to Russian newspapers, to which he constantly sends articles signed by aliases and receives good emoluments for that.”²

Lavrov did return to Paris. At home he found a pile of newspapers carrying information on the last days of the Commune and reports on the trials of Communards. Letters from Paris were sent to Marx, Engels

¹ *Golos minuvshogo*, pp. 121, 123-24.

² *Prometei* (Prometheus), Moscow, 1969, p. 332 (in Russian).

and Hermann Jung, an outstanding figure in the International. They all were concerned over the fate of the Communards. So, money was raised for them and they were helped to escape to safe places. That was being done, among others, by the Russian refugee who provided Communards with passports.

It was a hard job to raise the money. The workers' organisations were destroyed, and the number of Lavrov's personal acquaintances was limited. He had to count on his own finances: "Beginning with December, I hope I'll be able to send my share of regular donations, since my literary affairs seem to be improving. But I understand that this is a drop in the bucket, while what we need is a stream," Lavrov wrote to Jung in October 1871¹

* * *

"I remain Russian in my heart..."—these were not mere words: forced emigration was not a break with his homeland. Lavrov remained a Russian abroad as well—a Russian democratic publicist. Since his first days in Paris he sought to establish ties with those who remained in Russia and took keen interest in the developments in the revolutionary quarters.

In May 1870, Lopatin brought dreadful news from Russia: Sergei Nechayev, the men whom Ogarev and Bakunin regarded as a brave and honest revolutionary, as their agent number one in Russia, and whom they fully trusted, despite Herzen's warnings, committed an inconceivable act. To build up his prestige in the underground, to rule out the slightest deviation from the ideas he propounded and, the main thing, to frighten the other members of the organisation, "binding them together by blood", in November 1869, he killed Ivan Ivanov, a student whom he had suspected of dissidence and disobedience. The news shocked Lavrov. He had heard from Mikhail Negreskul, his son-in-law, that Nechayev was

¹ *Letopisi Marksizma* (Chronicles of Marxism), 1930, No. 2 (XII), p. 158 (in Russian).

a dishonest man, a mystifier with Jesuitical morals. But to do such a thing! That was nothing short of revolutionary cannibalism!

How would Russian revolutionaries respond to that?

In a letter to Lavrov, *Natalya Herzen* wrote on 10 July 1870: "Now Bakunin and even Ogarev know that they had been deceived and have broken all relations with Nechayev and his friends..."

Nikolai Lyubayin wrote to Lavrov on 28 July 1870: "Look at our heroes, the liberators of unhappy mankind! I have no doubt that there are quite a few rotters among politicians in all countries, but it seems we have more of them; and I think that this is caused partly by the great misunderstanding of the principle prevailing here — 'the goal justifies the means'. Comparing the struggle against the present regime with war, they forget that not all is permissible even in war... But the main thing is that they ignore the fact that one cannot be unscrupulous in means unless one violates what is called conscience." ¹

Lavrov saw once again how important moral questions were for revolutionaries. He felt the urge to write about that — a revolution could be prepared only with clean hands. Systematic work was necessary to educate the revolutionary youth. And a revolutionary periodical or paper was needed too.

* * *

In March 1872, delegates from Russia suddenly visited him in his new flat in the *Chaussée-d'Antin* in Paris and offered him to publish a journal. They promised money. The visit from his homeland and the offer itself were encouraging. Lavrov thought he was capable of starting a great undertaking like that. He agreed.

Yeliseyev, a publicist, tried to dissuade Lavrov from publishing an illegal journal.

In a letter from Kissingen he wrote to Lavrov

¹ Central State Archives of the October Revolution, fund 1762, inventory 4, file 655, sheet 1.

(to Paris) on 7 June 1872: "So what are we to do now?" you may ask. Wait a bit and keep on doing what you did before. The government is evidently pleased with you. For it expected that, once abroad, you would act like Herzen. But you sit quite calmly there. A year or two, or even less, will pass, and it will agree to your return, and then you will be of great help there."¹

Lavrov did not want, and could not, "sit quite calmly". Pondering over his decision, he wrote to Yelena Shtakenshnaider: "I didn't rush to engage in battles; I didn't consider myself useful; I thought that I was regarded as someone respectable, but unfit for practical activity. But when I was called, when people came to me from the country for which alone I can be useful, and when I was told: 'We rely on you, and you alone', I had no right to refuse."²

Like Yeliseyev, Yelena Shtakenshnaider tried her best to convince Lavrov to give up the whole idea and wrote that the response in Russia to issuing an illegal journal would be negative, that it would not attract enough readers, nor would he find correspondents and associates. "The editorial staffs for which you work now are alarmed. All respect you, considering your cooperation to be an honour, but they are no heroes, Petr Lavrovich."

The situation was serious enough: Lavrov could lose the earnings he was receiving from the legal journals *Dyela* (The Affairs), *Znaniya* (Knowledge) and *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (Fatherland Notes), and the fate of a future journal depended largely on that. Things became still worse when the money promised by the "delegates from Russia" did not arrive. There were neither associates nor correspondents. It was hard, indeed, to launch a publication of a revolutionary journal practically from nothing.

Lavrov arrived in Zurich in November 1872 for one or two months to see if it was possible to

¹ *Vperyod!* (Forward!) 1873-1877. Materials from V. N. Smirnov's Archives, Vol. 2, Dordrecht, Holland, 1970, p. 35 (in Russian).

² *Golos minuvshogo*, 1916, No. 9, p. 135.

publish the journal there. He liked that city with white houses, water-mills, calm streets, sombre cathedrals, monasteries, towers and arches — a promised land for students and scientists, a centre of intellectual life of Switzerland, and not only Switzerland for that matter. The academy of arts and music, the university, the institute of exact sciences and the institute of law, a museum, public libraries, polytechnical and anatomical schools, botanical gardens — all that attracted people from all over Europe. Russian scientists, too, arrived there to enlarge their knowledge. Zurich became a centre of a vast Russian community. Russian could be heard in the streets, in shops, in cafes, and at the University. The famous Oberstrasse was a veritable Russian town where Russian students dragged out a miserable existence — a “second Russia”, as Vyrubov once called it.

Lavrov was interested, above all, in the Russian library. It was on the first floor of a wooden house. It had a large reading hall with dozens of Russian, French and German newspapers and magazines laid out on the tables. That was really a centre of emigrant life. Lavrov visited cafes frequented by ordinary workers, where he met emigrants who had joined various groups which were at odds with one another. He did not fail to pay a visit to the home of the late Alexander Herzen, but Herzen's second wife Natalya did not appeal to him much.

On a Sunday night early in December, Lavrov read a lecture on the history of science at the Russian library. His simple and vivid narration was liked by the numerous listeners. He proved that the collapse of bourgeois societies was inevitable, made plans of building a just social system, and spoke of the role of the younger generation in changing the world. His debut was a success.

He read two more lectures on 24 and 30 December. Almost the entire Russian community — over 150 people — were present. The titles of the lectures were fairly abstract: “The Role of Slavs in the History of Thought”, but their meaning was definite enough: the Slavs should reject the old world and achieve “the truth in thinking and justice in

life" and join the common struggle in the world for social change.

Lavrov came back to Paris early in February. It took him less than a month to manage all his affairs, after which he returned to Zurich, this time for good.

Lavrov and his associates set up a publishing commune of a kind. They bought a house in the name of Alexander Lobov, Lavrov's former student who now lived in Zurich. They came to live in that house all together. They had a common dining room, a reading room, and a room where lectures were read. On fixed days once a week young people came there to discuss political news and scientific matters and to hold discussions.

Lavrov wrote a letter to Vyrubov in Paris on 30 March 1873: "Our house is on a hilltop, overlooking a very beautiful lake and distant mountains. My Paris books have arrived, though some of them have perished, evidently on the way. Now I am waiting for the books from Russia."¹

The impression of the publishing activities of Herzen and the popularity of his *Kolokol* (The Bell) were still fresh in the memory of Lavrov's associates. They believed that such a tradition could be followed, and a journal published abroad could be a success. At the close of 1872, Valerian Smirnov wrote to his friend Alexander Buturlin, an emigrant: "I candidly believe that a bright future lies ahead before our journal. You remember what was in the late 1850s and early 1860s, when Herzen's *Kolokol* tolled through the fog of England? Our young people in every part of Russia listened intently to those sounds and to their accompaniment they, ardent and tireless, went out in crowds to the squares, to Sunday schools, to villages, preaching freedom..."²

For whom was the planned publication meant?

Drawing up a programme for the new publication, Lavrov realised full well that it was not going to be

¹ *Vestnik Yevropy* (European Bulletin), 1914, No. 3, pp. 218-19 (in Russian).

² *Materials from V. N. Smirnov's Archives*, Vol. 2, p. 81.

an easy job. He had to take into account also the requirements of the revolutionary underground in Russia and the intensity of passions among the emigrants, and, of course, the general trend the journal would follow. Anyway, the final version of the programme was ready by July.

It clearly proclaimed the need for revolutionary struggle for a just social system. The way proposed by the liberals — peaceful constitutional reconstruction — was totally unsuitable, because it ignored the main, i. e. economic requirements of the working masses. Social reconstruction had to be effected not only for the people, but also “by the people”. The opinion that the socialist revolutionaries could overthrow the central government by a “successful thrust” and establish a new regime to the benefit of the unprepared popular masses was utterly wrong. “Revolutions cannot be caused in an artificial way, because they are a product neither of somebody’s will, nor of the activities of a small group, but of a whole number of complex historical processes.”

Though the revolution in Russia was inevitable, the people was unprepared for it so far. “To ensure the success of a popular revolution, when it becomes necessary, when it is caused by the course of historical events and government actions — this is the nearest goal of the activities which we regard obligatory for anyone who wishes Russia good...”¹

In May 1873, the *Pravitelstvenny Vestnik* (Government Bulletin) issued this report: The “Russian emigration ringleaders” have chosen Zurich as the centre of revolutionary propaganda and “have directed every effort at recruiting students”. Russian girls are forgetting the basic principles of “morality and chastity”. The government warned Russian women that those of them who after 1 January 1874 would remain at the Zurich University and polytechnic would “not be admitted” to educational establishments upon their return to Russia.

Those days the Russian community in Zurich re-

¹ P. L. Lavrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, 1934, pp. 31, 35-36.

sembled a disturbed ant-hill. Lavrov addressed a meeting of emigrants with a speech against the scandalous act by the tsarist government. In mid-June his speech "To the Russian students in Zurich" was published anonymously as a separate appeal. That was the first publication of the printing shop "Vperyod!" (Forward!), the first political work by Lavrov spearheaded openly against Russian autocracy: "The Russian emperor, pursuing his policy of unlimited power, deemed it necessary to take pittances away from the families who were training a helper for themselves, from a poor girl who stinted herself in sleep and food and in young merry-making and left her home in order to have a sure piece of bread and fundamental knowledge for the future." The concluding words of the appeal expressed the hope for a social remaking of Russian society and confidence in the potential strength of the people. They passed a verdict on the autocracy: "Perhaps the time of this power is running out. Perhaps the vast movement of workers' socialism, now fermenting in all liberal kingdoms and republics and in the entire legal-industrial system of Europe, will blast the archaic edifice of irresponsible and unlimited Russian empery together with the other ones, or perhaps even earlier than the others."¹

Less than a year passed since Lavrov and his editorial staff had settled in Zurich. They just set things going and were about to put out the first issue of the journal, when all of a sudden ... Russians began to leave the city, moving to other university centres of Europe, or coming back to Russia. Spies and informers crippled the prospects for the publication. Government agents could reach the journal some day. So it was clear that *Vperyod!* had to be published somewhere else. But the first issue had to come out first. And soon a thick 500-page volume in paperback was put out. Printed on the title-page was: *Vperyod!* Non-periodical review, Vol. 1, 1873. On the first page an italicised text

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 21.

without a headline said: "Far away from the homeland we raise our banner, the banner of social revolution for Russia, for the whole world. This is not the cause of a single person, nor of a group of persons; this is the cause of all Russians who have realised that the present political order pushes Russia towards a collapse, that the present social system is incapable of healing its wounds. We have no name. All of us are Russians demanding a rule by the people, the real people, for Russia; we are Russians aware that this rule can be established only through a popular uprising and we are determined to prepare this uprising, to explain to the people its rights, its strength, and its duties..."¹

On his arrival in London late in February 1874 Lavrov immediately began to look for a permanent house for his journal. He soon found an appropriate house in the northern outskirts of London in 20 Moray Road, Tollington Park Holloway. The editorial staff moved there on 12 March. That was a calm place close to a row of stalls, with the necessary amenities.

In that house the *Vperyod!* editorial board functioned until April 1875, when the circumstances made it move on to a new place in 3 Evershot Road, Tollington Park, Holloway. The new place was a small four-storied house the type Britain abounds in. They lived as a commune. In the semi-basement they had a kitchen and a dining room. On the first floor there was a reception room facing onto the street and Lavrov's room full of books, with the windows overlooking a small garden.

The typesetting office with four cases was in a neighbouring side-street, in a large barn with overhead lighting. The galleys were set in the printing plates and carried in a hand-cart to the *Daily News* printing house in the centre of London. There the sheets were printed on a contractual basis, and were then carried back on the same cart.

Boxes with books and printing equipment arrived

¹ *Vperyod!* (Forward!), Vol. 1, Zurich, 1873, p. III (in Russian).

on 18 March 1874. The printing office began to work to full capacity, and the third volume of the journal was being prepared. Lavrov wrote a series of articles for it.

But a thick journal issued once or twice a year could not, of course, be a revolutionary periodical responding quickly to current events. What they needed was a newspaper: it was easier to prepare, more convenient to dispatch across the border, and it could timely report the events in Russia and Western Europe. But that would require more correspondents and reliable and regular illegal dispatch.

Lopatin proved most helpful in launching the newspaper. Occupying no official post in the *Vperyod!* editorial board, he was raising funds, establishing the delivery transit points, selecting correspondents. He did everything efficiently, with good enterprise and enthusiasm. On 5 January 1875, Lavrov told Lopatin that the type-setting was already under way, and on 15 January he announced gladly: "I have just come home, to find the first issue of the paper. I will send you 50 copies today."

The editorial, entitled "The New Year 1875", was written at one go: "On the Russian New Year day we are printing the first sheet of our newspaper. On its front page we send our greetings to you, our far-away brothers ... during the spread of violence, imprisonments, and exile that befall you, just as we sent greetings to you a year ago through our journal, amidst the spread of popular distress and famine... We told you then: fight, this is the only way of helping the suffering people; throw a seed and it will grow. And we tell you now: keep on fighting; the seed is growing... The preach of social revolution has reached every part of Russia; it has reached its remotest towns and is spreading among the people."¹

The newspaper was a fortnightly. Lavrov wrote all the editorials. Besides, almost every issue carried his article, or even two or three of them, on social

¹ *Vperyod!*, 15 January 1875, No. 1.

revolution, revolutionary morals, and the role of science in social struggle.

Right upon his arrival in London, Lavrov decided to visit Marx. On 10 March 1874, he informed Lopatin that he had gone to see Marx, but did not find him at home. They did meet later, but this requires some explanation. So, let us go a few years back.

In the summer of 1870, Lavrov was aware of acute contradictions that had flared up between Marx and Bakunin. "Why are these gentlemen so angry at each other?" he wrote Lopatin on 19 July. "Could you help, if not to reconcile these camps, then at least to allay the enmity, for it definitely harms the social cause."¹

Lopatin refused to act as a peace-maker. In the autumn of 1872 things grew even worse. Lavrov began to show he was displeased with the position of Marx and Engels and did not approve, on the whole, of the policy they pursued with regard to Bakunin and his supporters.

Though he highly valued the activities of the International, which united the movement of the proletariat the world over, Lavrov disapproved of the split in the International and of discrediting Bakunin. The year 1873 saw Lavrov's determined self-isolation from both Marxism and Bakuninism.

As he read the work written by Marx and Engels, entitled "The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association", in which they exposed the harmful role of Bakunin in the International, Lavrov regarded it as "an extremely acrimonious and not very honest pamphlet", though "very cleverly" written.

Later the relations between Marx and Lavrov worsened still more because of the "Labour Movement Chronicle" carried in the second volume of *Vperyod!* (1874). Turning back to the polemic between Marxists and Bakuninists, Lavrov censured Marx, Engels and their supporters.

In the articles published on 6 and 8 October

¹ *Lavrov — Years of Emigration*, Vol. I, p. 13.

1874 in the newspaper *Volksstaat* (which later were included in the "Refugee Literature" series), Engels lashed out at Lavrov's compromising stance: "In his philosophy, Friend Peter is an eclectic who selects the best from all the different systems and theories: try everything and keep the best!"¹

Meanwhile, on 15 October 1874, Lopatin, to whom Engels had sent his articles on the "Refugee Literature", wrote to Engels: "As to me I read them with much interest and cannot but recognise the truth of the argument. But as to the form it is rather biting. Really you *are* wicked. I could not help laughing though it was with my friends that you have dealt so severely."² Engels replied to Lopatin that he had had no intention to use the paper for ridiculing Lavrov, that he had tried to be discreet and even toned down the text "as much as it was possible". "As far as I am concerned *nous sommes quittes*, and I am ready to shake his hand any time if he takes the thing as easy as I do."³

Lopatin told these words from Engels's letter to Lavrov in confidence. However, Lavrov thought it was awkward to seek a restoration of ties with Marx and Engels — it was not he who had broken them. On the other hand, he found the situation trying for him and wanted no more polemic.

Soon their good relations were restored. Anyway, when the third volume of *Vperyod!* came out, Lavrov presented it to Marx and the latter found nothing in it that could spoil their comradely relations. Marx showed special interest in the section "What Is Going On in the Homeland".

Some time later, when the first volume of Lavrov's "Experience of the History of Thought", which had just been issued as a separate edition, was delivered from St. Petersburg, Lavrov presented it to Marx. The inscription on it said: "To Karl Marx, the teacher of socialists, from the author

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1989, p. 19.

² Karl Marx, *Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia*, Moscow, 1967, p. 313 (in Russian).

³ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 33, S. 649.

as a token of friendship and respect". Lavrov presented another copy to Engels.

From early 1875 to May 1877, Marx and Lavrov visited each other frequently without ceremony. Lavrov was often invited for dinner to Marx's home, they exchanged literature and news. On 23 April 1877, on Shakespeare's birthday, Marx wrote to Lavrov: "My dear friend, I'm sending you on behalf of my daughter Tussy a ticket (for two persons) for the stalls in the *Lyceum Theatre*. They are for today's performance (Monday). Richard III is on."¹

Marx did not like to waste time on talking with people who were not interesting to him. Lavrov was not among the latter. "This is exactly a man who can make me talk for hours," wrote Marx.² Sometimes they did not have enough time to discuss all the pressing issues and continued an exchange of opinion through correspondence.

* * *

The newspaper and journal *Vperyod!* ceased to be published by 1877. Early in May that year Lavrov moved to Paris. That did not prevent him, however, from maintaining ties with Russian revolutionaries.

The revolutionary organisation Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) was preparing an attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II to be effected on the Moscow-Kursk railway, about three kilometres from Moscow. A house was bought in the name of merchant Sukhorukov, in which Lev Gartman with a "wife", Sofia Perovskaya, took up residence. An underground tunnel was dug out, about 43 metres long, which ended under the railroad and dynamite mines were placed there. The train with the emperor was to pass there on 19 November. On that day a blast smashed a train, but it was a wrong train — the tsar had passed earlier. Those who made the assassination attempt escaped.

¹ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 34, 1966, S. 272.

² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, 1967, S. 73.

Gartman appeared in Paris in December 1879, under the name of Schulz, and then changed that name to Eduard Meyer. However, he was recognised, and the Russian ambassador, Prince Nikolai Orlov, informed Louis Andrieux, the prefect of the local police, that Lev Gartman was hiding in Paris. Gartman was arrested on 3 February 1880. On the following day the tsar's ambassador officially addressed the French government, demanding his extradition.

French socialists and radicals, writers and scientists came out to defend Gartman. On 27 February, the French government was addressed by Victor Hugo: "You cannot extradite this man. Between you and him is law, and above law there are rights... You will not extradite this man."¹ Russian emigrants, too, did not bide their time. On 28 February, Lavrov and his friends visited Léon Gambetta, the president of the House of Deputies in the Bourbon Palace.

In response to the request not to extradite Gartman, the leader of bourgeois republicans said that the French government would take a decision that would cause no harm to the country's dignity. Public opinion could not be ignored. Gartman was offered to leave France for Britain. The tsarist government had not expected that. Prince Orlov took a leave in ostensible protest and left Paris.

As soon as Gartman appeared in London, he and Lavrov began to correspond with each other. Lavrov sent him a letter and a note of reference to Marx. Marx received him "very amiably".

Gartman's letters kept coming from London, and Lavrov hardly managed to answer them. Gartman asked for books for Marx, shared his plans to publish a newspaper entitled the *Nihilist*, set up a committee in London to raise funds for Russian revolutionaries, reported the news from Russia, wrote about his London acquaintances, and asked Lavrov's advice on ways of establishing a Russian "social-

¹ Quoted from *Byloye* (The Past), St. Petersburg, April 1907, No. 4/16, p. 191 (in Russian).

revolutionary library". In the autumn Gartman left for America to campaign for Russian revolutionaries.

On 17 March 1879, a meeting was held in Lavrov's home to mark an anniversary of the Paris Commune. Lavrov addressed those present with a report. It was suggested that the report be published. Lavrov agreed. The work on the manuscript was over in September. Next year the book *18 March 1871* was published in Geneva. In that book Lavrov wrote that the Paris Commune was "the first revolution of the proletariat" and its brief existence had proved that bourgeois development gave no advantage in running social affairs, while the proletariat, when in power, can do this effectively.

On 22 June 1880, the papers reported that the House of Deputies had passed a decision to grant an amnesty to Communards. When in London, he had become good friends with Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray, Charles Longuet, Albert Theisz, Albert Regnard, and many other Communards. Together with Theisz, Lavrov spoke at a meeting in London held to commemorate the Paris Commune. Paris came to life. Soon the first groups of Communards arrived from the hard-labour prison in New Caledonia. The heroic Commune fighters were received with joy. Refugees, too, were gradually coming back. Among these were Charles Longuet, Paul and Laura Lafargue and many others with whom Lavrov had been associated.

The progressives in France gave the amnestied revolutionaries a warm welcome. But there was no amnesty in Russia. There the fighters against autocracy were seen off to penal-servitude and other prisons, and to exile.

* * *

Eleanor Marx wrote from London to Lavrov in Paris on 15 March 1883:

"Dear Mr. Lavrov,

It is all over. My father died yesterday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He fell asleep in his armchair without even a sigh. We didn't know when

he died — he seemed to be still sleeping. I cannot write. Within fifteen months I have lost all — the father, the mother and a sister. Now I'm all alone in this world. I know well that I can reckon on your friendly feelings,

Devotedly yours,
Eleanor Marx.”¹

Paul Lafargue went to London to attend the funerals. Lavrov sent with him an address on behalf of Russian socialists. The address was read out on 17 March over Marx' grave, after Engels had made his speech. It was read in French by Charles Longuet, Marx's son-in-law. “On behalf of all Russian socialists,” it said, “I send farewell greetings to the most outstanding of all socialists of our time. One of the greatest minds is no more; one of the most vigorous fighters against the exploiters of the proletariat has died.

“The Russian socialists bend down over the grave of the man who sympathised with their strivings in all the reverses of their terrible struggle... The death of Karl Marx will evoke grief among all who could understand his thoughts and appreciate his influence on our epoch.

“I will allow myself to add that this death will cause more profound grief among those who knew this man in his private life, especially those who loved him as a friend.”²

Lavrov loved Marx as a friend. He wrote to Eleanor Marx on 17 March: “Few people are happy to have a family like yours, to keep in their memory the images of the persons so worthy of love and respect, like those whom you have just lost... This is no consolation, of course, but, my dear Miss Eleanor, I don't believe in consolation and consider it absurd to try to console anyone in deep grief. Time alone, which is indifferent to all misfor-

¹ *Correspondence of Marx's Family with Russian Political Figures*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 47-48 (in Russian).

² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, 1962, S. 337.

tunes, to all suffering, cicatrises a fresh wound apart from our will, leaving a scar for ever..."¹

By the mid-1880s Lavrov was in the centre not only of the left-bank Russian community in Paris, but became a patriarch of the Russian refugees in the whole of Europe. His responsiveness, tolerance and unusual erudition were known to socialists of various trends, who recognised him either as their supporter or an ally in revolutionary struggle. People seeking his advice came to him from London and Berlin, from Zurich and Geneva. Socialists of Poland, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Bohemia grouped round Lavrov, asking his assistance. The door of his flat, crammed with books, was open to all. Lavrov was always informed about the latest scientific achievements, which attracted young scientists to him. Owing to his assistance, many of them got access to the scientific institutions of Paris and established scientific contacts.

He was just indispensable for Russian refugees, helping them with money and giving letters of introduction to those who looked for a job. He was on good terms with Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue, Charles Longuet, Benoît Malon, and Edouard Vaillant. He had connections also in the government quarters. Among the French radicals he was most respected by Georges Clemenceau, the head of the opposition and the "destroyer of ministries". On more than one occasion a simple message sent by Lavrov to Clemenceau saved Russian refugees from reprisals. Those years political refugees — Italians or Spaniards — were often deported from France, but not a single Russian was deported, largely due to Lavrov.

On his birthday his closest friends usually gathered in his home. They made speeches, expressing respect and admiration. In 1885 it was decided to celebrate not only his birthday but also the 25th anniversary of his social and literary activities. The room was filled up with flowers and presents.

¹ *Correspondence of Marx's Family with Russian Political Figures*, p. 49.

The refugee community ordered a dinner with cheap champagne in a restaurant in the Glacière Street. Members of various Russian revolutionary groups, Polish socialists, Parisians — all gathered there.

Comrades in emigration made speeches. Polish socialists, among others, greeted Lavrov cordially. The address they signed said: "On the occasion of your anniversary celebrated today, the Polish socialists in Paris express their sincere admiration for you as the author of the first scientific social-revolutionary programme in Russia, and a devoted fighter for our cause."¹ Lavrov had a happy time then.

In 1889 France celebrated the centenary of the French Revolution. The World Paris Exhibition was timed to that event. Pavilions, galleries and gardens sprang up on the vast area between Trocadéro and the Champ-de-Mars. The Palace of Machines stunned the visitors by vast proportions. The Russian pavilion did not have big exhibits of national industry. Displayed there were handicraft wares, hand-made articles from the city of Tula, footwear and leather collections, and shining brocade of various hues. Famous Siberian sables were most impressive. The anthropological section was very interesting: multinational Russia offered a wealth of exhibits there. The visitors were attracted by the soil collection brought there by Professor Dokuchayev who had paid the transportation costs. It was a pity that painting was inadequately shown: only a few canvases by Ivan Aivazovsky, Yuly Klever, Ivan Kramskoy, and Konstantin Makovsky were on display. The Russian restaurant, where customers were offered all kinds of small pies and *kulebyakas* (larger pies with meat, fish or cabbage filling), pancakes with caviar and salmon, *shchi* (cabbage soup), and Russian vodka, enjoyed wide popularity.

Concerts where music by Russian composers was played were also very popular. Lavrov listened to

¹ *Central State Archives of the October Revolution, fund 1762 (Addresses to Lavrov).*

his favourite music with delight. One of the concerts he attended was devoted entirely to Mikhail Glinka.

Paul Lafargue asked Lavrov in a letter to affix his name to the announcement of the convocation of an international socialist congress: it was to be signed by representatives of various socialist parties. Lavrov was, in essence, such a representative. But he did not consider himself to be one. In his reply, he recognised the significance of the congresses of the International, but said that "time had not come yet" for Russia to join "the great activity of the organised proletariat of all countries", and therefore he could not represent the socialists of his country, though it would be honourable for him to put his name beside the names of Lafargue, Guesde, Liebknecht, Bebel, and de Paepe. "I ask you," Lavrov wrote, concluding his answer, "to convey from me and from my numerous friends most profound sympathy to the valiant fighters, the congress delegates."¹

Lavrov's answer became known to Engels, who advised Lafargue on 27 May: "Since Lavrov makes difficulties, write to Pavel Axelrod to the following address: Kephir-Anstalt, Hirschengraben, Zurich, and ask him to get the signatures of Vera Zasulich (for you don't have her address), his own signature, and also those of Georgi Plekhanov and Russian Marxists. How surprised the gallant eclectic will be!"²

The preparations for the congress breathed fresh life into the Russian emigration. Meetings were held. Official letters were sent to Lavrov from Paris, Zurich, Bern, and London, in which he was asked to agree to be a delegate to the forthcoming congress. On 23 May, the Russian emigrant thought he was not entitled to represent revolutionary Russia, but the unanimous request made him change his mind. So he sent a new letter to Lafargue, saying that groups of Russian socialists had asked him to be their delegate at the congress.

Lavrov's popularity was reflected clearly enough

¹ *Correspondence of Marx's Family with Russian Political Figures*, pp. 100-102.

² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, B.G. 37, 1967, S. 225.

in the minutes of the Paris Congress: "Russia. From the union of Russian Social-Democrats — Vera Zaslulich, Plekhanov, Axelrod, and Stepniak. From the association of Russian workers in Paris, from the Russian socialist publishing association in Zurich, from the editorial board of the Russian journal *Sotsialist*, from the group of socialist-revolutionaries of St. Petersburg, and from the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) group based abroad — Petr Lavrov."

The congress opened in Paris on 14 July 1889, the day when the centenary of the seizure of Bastille was marked. The slogans in the hall said: "The Workers of All Countries, Unite!", "On behalf of Paris of June 1848, and March, April and May 1871, on behalf of France of Babeuf, Blanqui and Varlin we greet the socialist workers of both hemispheres."

Lavrov was elected to the congress bureau, and on 17 July he addressed the delegates with a paper "On Socialism in Russia". The paper was published in the French newspapers *La Société Nouvelle* and *La Revue Socialiste*. After a brief review of the history of socialism in Russia, Lavrov concluded his speech with these words: "I affirm that Russian socialism has not died in its sixteen-year struggle against the enemy. It has not yet been able to form a party of workers, but it was only the political conditions in Russia that prevented it from doing that. The social-revolutionary party, which fought, and is fighting now, to change these conditions, has suffered heavy reversals; but those who have joined it, are determined to fight to the end in order to provide the conditions required for forming a workers' party."¹

The congress ended with a banquet in a Town Hall, at which German social democrats August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were most popular. Those days Lavrov became friends with them. He believed that "Bebel is the future of Germany". Lavrov received his German friends at home, and then paid return visits.

The preparations for the congress, the numerous

¹ *La Société Nouvelle*, Paris, Bruxelles, 1889, 5-e année, tome II, pp. 50-51.

meetings with socialists, sessions, speeches, and his own speech — all that upset his routine. Lavrov was getting tired: he was sixty-six years old then. He complained to his friends Byelogolovys that he had been overwhelmed by the work at the congress, by all the fuss and new acquaintances.

Byelogolovy wrote from Thun to Lavrov in Paris on 21 July 1889:

"I believe, dear Petr Lavrovich, that the congress gave you a lot of trouble, but since all this is to your liking ideologically, and, besides, is to some extent the duty of your service, then I do not pity you much, because fulfilment of a duty should give you satisfaction... I believe that the congress will have a practical result for you in the sense that it will bring French and German socialists closer together, and this will be a great step..."¹

Lavrov's international contacts at the congress yielded definite results. Liebknecht offered him to cooperate in the *Vorwärts*, the central press organ of the party. After some doubts Lavrov agreed. He wanted to tell the German socialists about the revolutionary movement in Russia and explain to Liebknecht his own position with regard to Plekhanov.

Lavrov wrote on 25 October 1890 that Plekhanov's programme was "even very good theoretically", but it did not reflect the aspirations of the Russian revolutionary youth and was impracticable. "We have no intention whatsoever," he went on, "to attack Plekhanov and his group. But I consider it my duty to warn you that the Russian affairs will be assessed in it (correspondence) from the point of view of the majority of the groups operating in Russia."²

The first article by Lavrov, "The Situation in Russia", appeared in the *Vorwärts* on 1 January 1891; it was signed Semen Petroff. After that articles were published under that pen name in February,

¹ *Central State Archives of the October Revolution*, fund 1762, inventory 4, file 37, sheet 85.

² *Militant Materialist*, Collection 4, Moscow, 1925, p. 221 (in Russian).

March, May and June. The last one in the series was carried in the 1 September issue.

Years went by... On 14 June 1893, at 7 o'clock in the afternoon, about two hundred people gathered in a Paris restaurant in Palais-Royal: Russians, Frenchmen, Poles, Bulgarians, Italians, and others. They had come to celebrate the 70th birthday of Lavrov. On behalf of the organisers of the celebration I. A. Rubanovich made an opening speech at the party: "Revolutionary France has not died, and you are not a foreigner to it, but an honourable citizen, a distinguished soldier of the great army of ideas, a fighter for the revolution that started in France at the close of last century and will end only in a worldwide victory of the working class over its numerous republican and monarchic enemies."¹

E. Serebryakov spoke on behalf of the veteran members of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will). After that letters and telegrams from Russia, Paris, Bern, Zurich, Dresden, and London were read out. Lavrov was greeted by Edouard Vaillant, Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue, Karl Kautsky, and Russian, French, Polish and Romanian students.

German and English social democrats sent their congratulations. One of them said:

"London, 13 June 1893.

Dear Lavrov,

You will turn seventy tomorrow. Accept our most sincere congratulations. Let you live to see the day when the Russian social-revolutionary movement, to which you have selflessly devoted all your life, will hoist its banner of victory over the ruins of tsarism.

Your sincere friends,

Frederick Engels,

Louise Kautsky,

Eleanor Marx-Aveling,

Edward Aveling."²

Then Lavrov spoke. He concluded his first speech with an address to the socialists of all countries, of

¹ *The 70th Birthday of Petr Lavrov*, a publication by a group of veteran Narodniks (Populists), p. 4 (in Russian).

² Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, 1968, S. 84.

"all nations and ages", thanked them for the honour accorded to him and said he hoped that "the day of triumph for the ideas inspiring all of us" would come soon. Addressing the Russians, he spoke of the difficulties confronting the revolutionaries in Russia and the tasks of forming a workers' party there. He said that the triumph of "socialist principles will never be complete and stable" without such a party and that a vigorous struggle must be launched against imperial absolutism. He finished with these words: "So, go and fight."

Early in October an article about Lavrov written by Georges Clemenceau was published in *La Justice*.

Lavrov wrote to Clemenceau on 8 October 1893, in Paris:

"I have been ill and lying in bed for several days now. They brought me a *La Justice* issue of the day before yesterday, but it is only today that I'm able to take up a pen and thank you for your too laudatory article... It means a great deal that the first publicist of France, being busy with immense everyday work, having to deal with a multitude of most serious philosophical problems and events and facts of all kinds, which attract the attention of only those who can determine their historical significance, found time to write about a man who is lonely and little known..."

Georges Clemenceau replied to Lavrov on 19 October:

"My dearest teacher and friend,

It is we who should thank you for your wonderful life of a philosopher and fighter... I can only say that I feel most profound and sincere admiration for you since long ago, in my mind and in my heart. I love you, and that is all there is to it...

Yours with all my heart,

G. Clemenceau."¹

In the mid-1890s Lavrov's memory grew weak, his eyesight was poor, he was getting tired quickly, and his former capacity for work was on the wane. It was then that his daughter Maria Negreskul arrived from

¹ *Central State Archives of the October Revolution*, fund 1761, inventory 4, file 218.

Russia. She looked after her father, kept house, read for him, and accompanied him anywhere he went. That certainly supported his depleting strength, and he did not feel so lonely.

The death of Engels, with whom he had been friends for so many years, was a heavy blow for him. On 7 August 1895, he wrote to Eleanor Marx-Aveling, who was in London:

"My dear friend,

I have just received my mail, opened *La Petite République* and read the fateful words: 'The death of Frederick Engels'. What a misfortune! What a misfortune it is! It seemed impossible that a disease could break this powerful man, despite his age and his fighting for the banner he carried. The sorrowful news distressed me so deeply that I am unable to write much. But I wanted to share with you the grief immediately, the grief of not only a friend, but of a convinced socialist, and I wanted to share it precisely with you, a daughter of Karl Marx, for whom, I am sure, Engels was a second father and who is the heiress of the two brightest lights of socialism.

Yours,

P. Lavrov."¹

Even in the last years of his life Lavrov had a majestic appearance and commanded great respect: a lion's head with long grey hair, a broad and thick beard, a stern moustache which nonetheless gave him a good-natured look, a spacious forehead, a big nose and a deep wrinkle at the bridge of the nose, and the near-sighted and slightly screwed-up eyes, the eyes which looked adamantly strict whenever a man he knew committed an evil deed.

Lavrov, who was rarely ill, had moderate habits, and worked systematically. But old age and illness were creeping up to him. One morning in the spring of 1895, he woke up to discover that he was almost blind. He had really a hard time then. After two or three days his eyesight somewhat improved. He was treated by Xavier Galezowski, a well-known eye doctor

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Revolutionary Russia, p. 738.

who had immigrated from Poland. After two weeks of treatment Lavrov could read in daylight, but he was forbidden to tire his eyes at night. His friends read for him. His daughter Maria read more often than others.

Illness was reaching out for him also from another side — painful fits of asthma grew frequent. He found it hard to walk to the restaurant and he took an omnibus, always a top seat, to get there. Later, he had to eat in a near-by restaurant. During the last six months the meals had to be brought home to him.

At the end of his life Lavrov was treated by doctor Efron, a friend whom he trusted. The doctor would be invited immediately when he felt worse. Lavrov waited for the doctor's visits impatiently and, as he came, he asked him many questions: could he go out? What was he allowed to eat? Could he drink coffee? And the main thing — could he work?

The doctor's visits alleviated tension. The sick man would ask him to sit on the sofa beside him, and tell him about his ailments in detail. The doctor would listen attentively, after which he would give his recommendations in a calm voice: "It's nothing serious, Petr Lavrovich. Just a light chill; take care a day or two... I will prescribe medicinal powders." Lavrov would calm down, and in 10 or 15 minutes the doctor and his patient would discuss politics, the latest publications, and the matters related to the working-class movement. Lavrov usually followed the doctor's instructions unquestioningly. But when he was prohibited to work, he would get excited and say with a frown: "It's all for nothing! I can work all right. I know my strength."¹

The illness would recede and then Lavrov would work hard, writing his *History of Thought*. The book was growing larger than initially conceived. He realised that his days were counted, that he had to hurry. But he had no time to complete the book.

On 30 January 1900, Lavrov felt better and worked as usual. An article in the *Revue Bleue* about Paul

¹ *To the Memory of Petr Lavrov*, Geneva, 1900, pp. 11-12 (in Russian).

Eugène Louis Deschanel, a French scientist and politician, was read to him. At dinner he looked animated. The conversation was about ethnography. When the daughter was reading *Le Temps* to him at eight or nine o'clock in the evening, Lavrov said he did not feel well. At night he had severe asthmatic fits. The doctor came in the morning. He calmed the sick man and prescribed complete rest. Lavrov could not bear that. Asthmatic fits recommenced. When a fit would cease, Lavrov would speak solely about work, asking the doctor when he would be allowed to work again. His strength was leaving him. Jean Baptiste Charcot, an expert on nervous diseases (the son of famous French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot), was invited. He came several times a day and sat for hours at Lavrov's bed. He rejected remuneration, and later wrote to Lavrov's daughter Maria that he was "rewarded already by being able to do all he could to save the life of Petr Lavrovich."

One day, when Lavrov felt better, he told his doctor firmly that he would resume his work on the next day. The doctor gave in. It was decided to move a desk close to his bed and bring his manuscripts from the study. He was going to work an hour a day with the help of his daughter and one more person. Lavrov was pleased. But at night he felt quite bad.

The news about his illness was spreading fast. Dozens of people came to his house on St. Jacques Street to inquire about his health. One of them recalled later: "One was to see all those people those days: socialists of various groups; people of different social statuses — from a world-renowned scientist to an ordinary worker — who had not seen each other for years, strangers and even adversaries — all forgot discord among themselves and merged into one united family possessed with one feeling, one sad thought."¹

Georges Clemenceau, himself seriously ill and bedridden, inquired about his health every day. Telegrams arrived from the Russian communities in other cities abroad — people wished him early recovery. Lavrov

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

tried to show the people around him that he did not consider himself doomed, and demanded that his daily routine should not be changed, that papers would be read to him and the news told as usual. Days of agonising struggle followed, but his strength petered out. In a low voice he said his last words: "My behest is ... live well. My life is ending, it has ended." On 6 February Lavrov died.¹

His last written words were: "The Awakening of Critical Thought". It was the title of a new chapter.

The Russian Ambassador to France, Baron A. P. Morenheim, thought he had a good chance to capture the archives of the deceased, which had long attracted the tsarist authorities. The French police arrived to make a search, but the Paris refugees, Lavrov's friends and French socialists, did not let the police in and guarded the house.

Telegrams kept arriving from various countries.

Paris, 8 February.

The General Committee of the French Socialist Party, deeply grieved by the death of Lavrov, a veteran of world social democracy, share with all our hearts the sorrow of the Russian proletarians and socialists and expect that the great city of socialism and revolution will arrange for the famous fighter and philosopher funerals worthy of him and of Paris.

Milan, 8 February.

The Italian Socialist Party and the parliamentary Socialist fraction, grieving at the tomb of noble revolutionary Petr Lavrov, whose glorious name is closely associated with the memories of the great martyrs of the Russian revolutionary movement, send their fraternal greeting...

Filippo Turati.

Stuttgart, 9 February.

Dear comrades,

Profoundly distressed, I share with all my heart

¹ *To the Memory of Petr Lavrov*, p. 28.

the heavy blow you have suffered from the death of your immensely respected leader P. Lavrov. Those who knew the great deceased will never forget the majestic and nice image of a man who combined the vast erudition of a scholar, the enthusiasm and selflessness of an apostle and the unflinching courage of a fighter. I bow with respect to the great deceased, one of the brightest personalities of people's socialism.

Clara Zetkin.¹

Berlin, 10 February.

On behalf of the German Social Democratic Party we bend down before the memory of the deeply honoured veteran of international socialism and revolutionary — Petr Lavrov.

Auer, Bebel, Hirsch,
Liebknecht, and others.²

The funerals were on 11 February. Emigrants, French socialists, students, and workers were coming to St. Jacques Street since early morning. The room which on Lavrov's birthdays was full of flowers was now full of funeral wreaths. People kept coming; a quiet despondent crowd gathered in the street. In the yard the wreaths hung on the walls; there were so many of them that some of the wreaths had to be left outside in the street.

At half past one the funeral procession of eight thousand people started out. Some shouted: "Long live the social revolution!", "Long live the International!", "Long live the Commune!". People started to sing the anthem "International". The funeral train moved on to the accompaniment of its solemn music. The rays of almost a spring sun, which suddenly broke through the clouds, were melting the snow. The sun looked like a symbol of socialism: under its hot rays the outgoing world of untruth was melting away. Thick crowds on the pavements were looking with surprise at the unusually large procession.

The French groups raised a red banner, and the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59-64.

² *Ibid.*

police interfered, marring for some time the general mood of solemnity.

Soon the procession reached the Montparnasse cemetery. The numerous delegations were carrying wreaths, hundreds of them.

A stern-looking blackthorn wreath had these words inscribed on a dark metallic plate: "From political exiles and political convicts to their great teacher Petr Lavrov". There was a big laurel wreath — "To P. L. Lavrov from the members of the Narodnaya Volya group"; a wreath from the first Russian Marxists — "To P. L. Lavrov from the Emancipation of Labour group"; and many wreaths from Bulgarian, Polish and Hungarian socialists; from the German Social Democratic Party, the French Socialist Party, the Belgian Workers' Party, and others. Many wreaths arrived from the students of various countries, from the editorial staffs of newspapers and journals, from the close friends of the deceased. The inscription on one of them said: "To Petr Lavrov from Hermann Lopatin".

Lavrov's friends, relatives, and socialists made speeches. Some of them said that he had had an immense moral strength, and during the thirty years in exile he had never lost heart and remained at his revolutionary post to his last days. The speakers noted the significant role Lavrov had played as a scholar and outstanding philosopher who had a powerful influence on the development of science and Russian social thought.

From the speech by Edouard Vaillant:

On behalf of the Social-Revolutionary Party and the General Committee of the French Socialist Party, and also as a personal friend of Lavrov, I must express the incessant pain and profound regret which we feel at this cruel loss irreparable for the International Revolutionary Party.¹

From the speech by Paul Lafargue:

The death of Petr Lavrov is a heavy loss to international socialism: in him it loses one of the

¹ *To the Memory of Petr Lavrov*, p. 41 (in Russian).

greatest fighters. This is why representatives of all the factions of the socialist party of Europe have gathered here around his coffin... Comrades from Russia, you have every right to be proud of Lavrov. Eternal honour to Russian socialism, which gave to the working class of the whole world this hero of thought, so modest and so invincible! ¹

Lopatin arrived in Paris in the summer of 1908. The last time he had seen Lavrov there was almost a quarter of a century before. That time they had said "good-bye" to each other. "I went to visit my unforgettable friend Petr Lavrovich on the very first day," he wrote later to Lavrov's daughter, "and stood a long time at a granite stone lying over his ashes, and regretted that I did not believe that soul was immortal, that I could not delude myself with an illusion that at that moment he was looking at me, sharing my emotion, as it used to be during our former joyful meetings after long periods of separation." ²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

² *Central State Archives of Literature and Arts*, fund 2534, inventory 1, file 47, sheet 15.

PETR KROPOTKIN

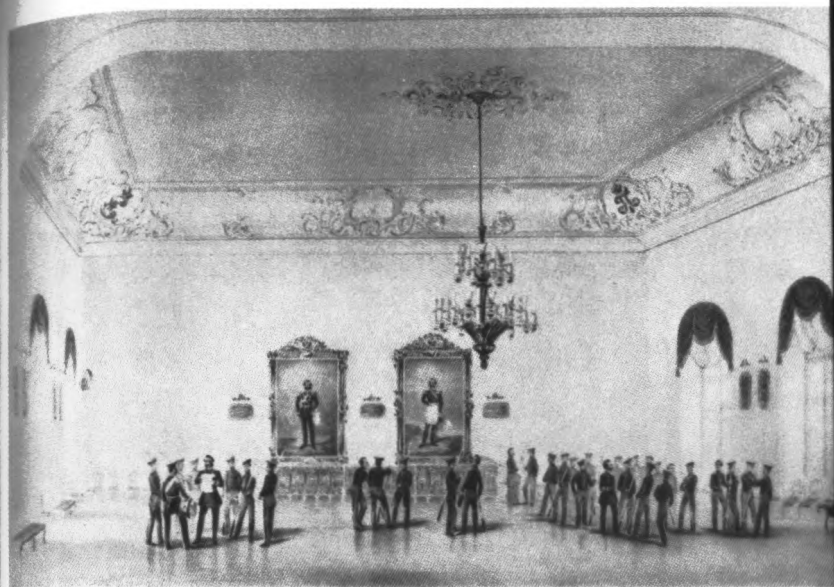
On the night of 1 June 1917, about sixty thousand people gathered in the square before the Finlyandsky Railway Station in Petrograd¹. Black and red banners fluttered in the weird light of the midnight sun. The troops stood lined up. Revolutionary Petrograd was meeting Petr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, an old world-renowned fighter for freedom, equality and fraternity.

The train pulled in at 2:30 a.m. The guards from the Semyonovsky Regiment could not make for the coach. "They definitely nearly squashed me," Kropotkin wrote on the next day in his diary. "...The officers wanted to carry me, but I refused. Sonya was nearly trampled. Then eight officers linked arms and surrounded me in a circle ... making their way through the swinging crowd with incredible effort. They forced their way not to the guards, but to the hall in which Kerensky and some other ministers and Nikolai Chaikovsky stood waiting for me. They delivered speeches of welcome, and I made a brief speech, too. We reached a motorcar at 3 o'clock."²

That was Kropotkin's return to the homeland he had left forty years before in quite different circumstances.

¹ Petrograd — St. Petersburg until 1914, renamed Leningrad in 1924.

² N. M. Pirumova, *Petr Kropotkin*, Moscow, 1972, p. 191 (in Russian).



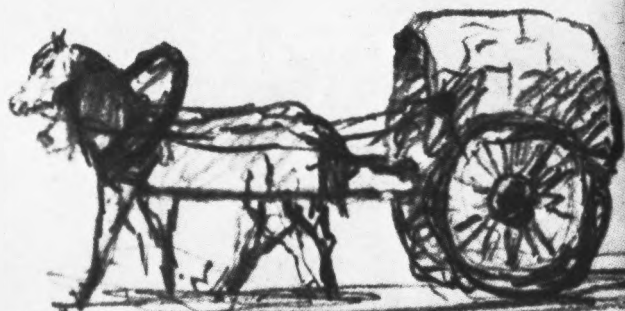
The Pages' School



Petr Kropotkin. Photograph.
1870s



Drawings done by Petr Kropotkin during
his years in Siberia. Second half of the
1860s

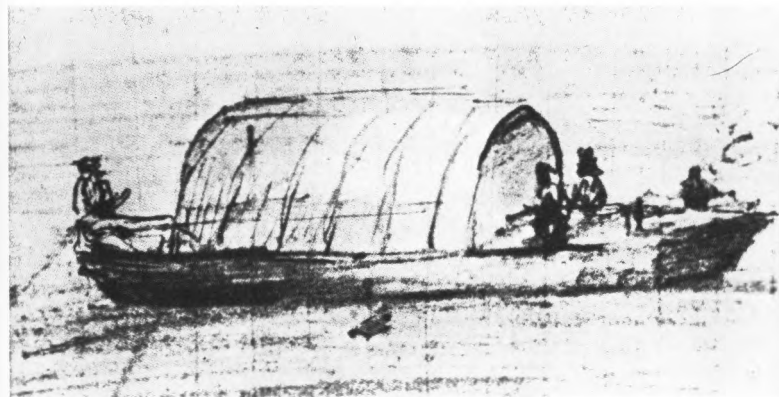


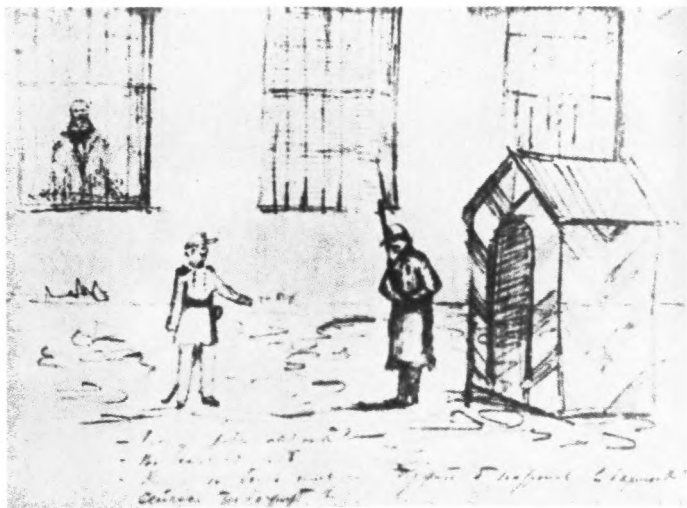
Horse & cart
too small

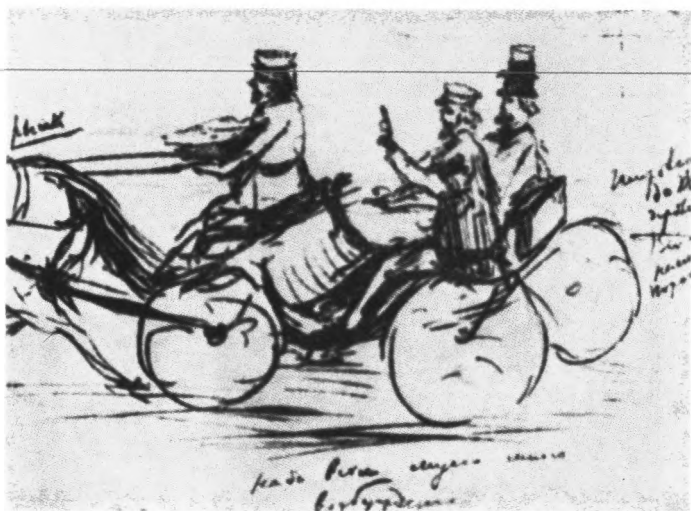
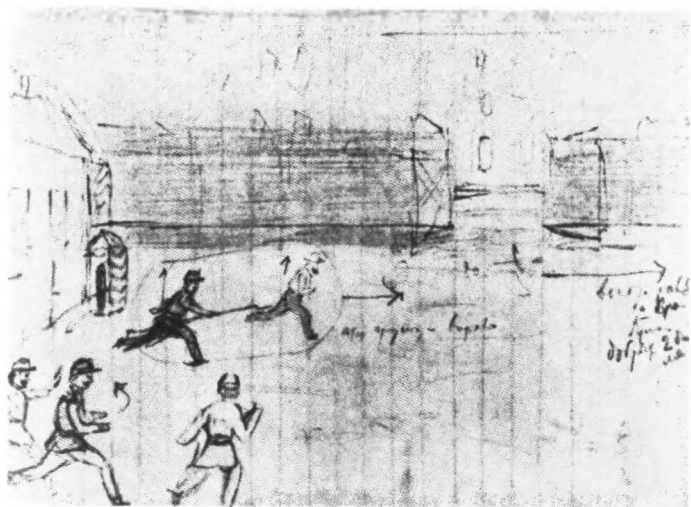
Now taking in the
Museum that is intended



has a table set out
to give notice of
Gypsy camp & sheep
to show them to 1864.







The prisoner Kropotkin's escape from the Nikolayevsky Military Hospital. Drawings by Petr Kropotkin



Sofia Kropotkina. Photograph.
1870s

Petr Kropotkin in front of the
London house where he lived in
the 1890s



Petr Kropotkin in his study.
1890s

Sofia and Petr Kropotkin in
Dmitrov, c. 1920



Alexandra Kropotkina. 1910s



Kropotkin's funeral in Moscow



Monument to Petr Kropotkin in
the Novodevichy Cemetery,
Moscow

There were many reverses in his life. He came from an ancient princely stock, graduated from the Page Corps, and preferred to go to Eastern Siberia as an officer of the Amur Cossack Army instead of serving at court. He felt keenly the poetry of nature and wanted to look into its essence, which determined his choice of a career of an explorer. For about six years he was occupied with research in geography and geology and studied nature.

Though he had good education, the lack of systematic knowledge in exact sciences was a hindrance, and he went to St. Petersburg in 1866 where he entered the physics and mathematics department at the University. He continued his geological studies, mainly in theory. In the latter half of the 1860s and the early 1870s he created a glacial theory, which has lost none of its scientific significance to this day, and calculated that an archipelago existed in the Arctic Ocean (it was called the Franz Josef Land in 1873). He worked much in the Geographical Society.

But other thoughts came to possess the young scientist ever more. In November 1867, he made the following entry in his diary: "Any man who devotes his intellectual energy, which can be spent on the urgently needed services for mankind, to speculation and studies that can be done without, is to be reproached for caring little for mankind. But who can tell (positively) that speculation, guided by correct scientific methods, about subjects that can really be grasped by the human mind, are not useful?"¹

Speculation was useful. Kropotkin was aware of that. But he thought about yet another urgently needed activity aimed at emancipating people.

By the early 1870s definite trends in the Russian revolutionary movement Narodism (Populism) had not yet taken shape. That was a time of search. "We had either to burrow in books, each doing this alone, ... or to look for all this in meetings of living people

¹ *A Diary of Petr Kropotkin*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923, p. 263 (in Russian).

equally concerned,"¹ wrote a member of Narodism. Kropotkin chose the third way. He decided to study the revolutionary movement in the West and went to Switzerland in 1872. In Zürich he became good friends with the followers of Mikhail Bakunin. "I spent days and nights reading, and received a deep impression which nothing will efface. The flood of new thoughts awakened is associated in my mind with a tiny clean room in the Oberstrasse, commanding from a window a view of the blue lake, with the mountains beyond it, ... and the high spires of the old town."² An unknown world was emerging before his eyes, but what he knew about it from books, and the knowledge learnt from the Bakuninist group could not satisfy him. "Having squeezed out of us all that he could and all that we could give him," recalled M. P. Sazhin, the organiser of the Bakuninist group, "and having received from us some instructions and addresses, he left first for Geneva and then for Neuchâtel."³

In Geneva Kropotkin began to attend meetings of a section of the International Working Men's Association, talking with its members and watching their daily life.

He was amazed to see the enthusiasm with which the workers went to their meetings after a hard working day, bringing the hard-won money to found a newspaper and help the comrades to support their section. His respect for them was unlimited. The workers' striving for knowledge, while there were too few voluntary teachers from among the intelligentsia, prompted him the idea of giving his time and knowledge to those simple, noble and selfless people. "I saw how much the toiling masses needed to be helped by men possessed of education and leisure in their endeavours... More and more I began to feel

¹ "Essays on the History of the Chaikovsky Group, 1869-1872", in: *Revolutionary Narodism (Populism) of the 1870s*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1964, p. 205 (in Russian).

² P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1899, pp. 58-59.

³ M. P. Sazhin, *Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1925, pp. 83-84. (in Russian).

that I was bound to cast in my lot with them.”¹ Thus his heart and mind were drawn to the world of working people once and for all. He associated himself closely with the leaders of the Jura Federation of the International, founded a year before. The association comprised workers, mainly watchmakers. Its ideological leader was Bakunin who at that time lived in Locarno. Among his closest associates were Adhémar Schwitzguébel and James Guillaume, a well educated man who had come to the working-class movement in 1865. Occupied with the problem of a moral perfection of mankind, Guillaume said that under Bakunin's influence he began to look for the taproot of morals in the collective consciousness of people united by revolutionary activities.

Kropotkin was fascinated by Guillaume's intelligence and knowledge and by the complete absence of a command tone in the relations between the workers and the Federation's founding fathers. He was greatly impressed by the meetings and talks with the Communards who had escaped from Paris to the Jura Mountains. Among his closest friends was Benoît Malon who earned his living by making wicker baskets, wrote letters for workers' newspapers and was writing a book about the Commune.

The stories told by Malon and other people who took part in the 1871 French Revolution and the terrible vengeance of the Versailles men on the workers of Paris caused inexplicable moral suffering to Kropotkin. The experience of the Commune greatly influenced the subsequent evolution of his views. The Paris Commune was a horrible example of a social explosion without clearly distinct ideals — that was his conclusion. In a future struggle the outcome, he believed, “will depend much less upon the efficacy of firearms and guns than upon the force of the creative genius which will be brought into action in the work of reconstruction of society. It will depend chiefly upon the constructive forces of society ... upon the inspirations being of a higher standard.”²

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, pp. 62-63.

² P. Kropotkin, *op. cit.* p. 78.

So, he laid stress on the moral aspect from the start of his revolutionary activities, believing it to be crucial for the outcome of the liberation struggle.

In Switzerland, during his talks with Guillaume, Malon and Schwitzguébel, and when reading anarchist literature, Kropotkin outlined a way for the further organisation of society which seemed the only rational way to him. That was the way of anti-authoritarian socialism. He set forth his views on social remaking of society and its future organisation in the memorandum "Ought We to Occupy Ourselves with a Consideration of the Ideal of the Future System?". The memorandum itself was written for the Narodnik group led by Nikolai Chaikovsky, which Kropotkin joined upon his return to St. Petersburg.

The group included people of rare staunchness, intelligence, gifts, and moral purity. All contemporaries spoke about them with respect and admiration: "...Those noble dispositions and those steadfast hearts..., who in any other country would have been the honour and glory of the nation".¹

Since 1873 dissemination of new ideas was central in the activities of the group. The best propagandists among the workers were Sergei Kravchinsky, Dmitry Klements, and Petr Kropotkin. The latter two had no vocation for organising clandestine associations. Klements had never set up a group, nor did he try to, and Kropotkin was "definitely incapable of commanding, and still less of organising, anyone," said Kravchinsky. "He has always had one thing in him: interest in an idea, in conviction, but not in the least in a practical result; he does not even think about it. In this way one will not set up a group or organise a party."² But nonetheless the workers, carried by the power of his thought and remarkable qualities of a public speaker, followed precisely him. "He is an incomparable agitator. Gifted with a ready and eager eloquence, he becomes all passion when he mounts the platform. Like all true orators, he

¹ Stepniak, *Underground Russia, Revolutionary Profiles and Sketches from Life*, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1883, p. 131.

² N. M. Pirumova, *Petr Kropotkin*, p. 67 (in Russian).

is stimulated by the sight of the crowd which is listening to him. Upon the platform this man is transformed. He trembles with emotion; his voice vibrates with that accent of profound conviction, not to be mistaken or counterfeited, and only heard when it is not merely the mouth which speaks, but the innermost heart. His speeches ... produce an immense impression; for when feeling is so intense it is communicative, and electrifies an audience.”¹

Soviet diplomat and scholar Ivan Maisky, who met Kropotkin forty years later, noted in his memoirs the same qualities of a remarkable orator. “As I was listening to Kropotkin in Brighton, I clearly realised why the lectures by Borodin beyond the Nevskaya Zastava [Neva Gates] were so popular with the workers.”² The man who addressed the workers under the name of Borodin was Petr Kropotkin.

“Often,” Kropotkin recalled, “after a dinner in a rich mansion, or even in the Winter Palace, where I went frequently to see a friend, I took a cab, hurried to a poor student’s lodging in a remote suburb, exchanged my fine clothes for a cotton shirt, peasant’s top boots, and a sheepskin, and ... went to meet my worker friends. ... I told them what I had seen of the labour movement abroad. They listened with an eager attention;... and then came the question, ‘What can we do in Russia?’. ‘Agitate, organise’, was our reply; ‘there is no royal road’; and we read them a popular story of the French Revolution.”³

However, the activities of Kropotkin in Chaikovsky’s group were not confined to the spread of ideas alone. Among his associates he considered to have more experience in life and greater theoretical knowledge, and so he was asked to draft a programme document for the group.

The draft he offered for discussion in November 1873 was called “Ought We to Occupy Ourselves With a Consideration of the Ideal of the Future

¹ Stepniak, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

² I. M. Maisky, *A Journey into the Past*, Moscow, 1960, p. 132 (in Russian).

³ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, pp. 119-20.

System?".¹ "I think we should," the draft began. All socialists, the author said, seek to provide "entirely equal conditions for the development of individuals and societies". To ensure full equality it was necessary to give effect to several features of the future "ideal". In the first place, all private property had to be abolished.

Then he substantiated his idea of equality: every member of society should be placed in the conditions in which one would have to earn his living. Privileged mental labour should not exist. "Should a professor ... only read lectures during fixed seven or eight hours and/or at the same time manufacture in a workshop instruments for a physics laboratory,... be occupied with sewage disposal in the university building, and so on? The latter, we believe, he should do. Because a formation of a class of the intelligentia doing mental work, a class of an aristocracy of pure work side by side with democracy of unskilled labour is totally undesirable."²

In order that education would not divide people into the administrators and the administrated, the entire system should be unified, linking it directly with production. All universities, academies and all other high schools should be closed and "workshop-schools be opened everywhere, which due to the extent of education would very soon reach the level of present universities, and even surpass that level".³

Political equality is the last feature of the "ideal". It should be established through a non-state organisation of life in society, through federations of farming communes and workers' artels.

The second part of that document was devoted to "practical measures to give effect to our ideal".

The chief task proclaimed in it was abolition of the contemporary state system through a social revolution, though the author expressed no hope that the "ideal" would be carried into life right after

¹ *Revolutionary Narodism in the 1870s*, Vol. 1, Document No. 4, pp. 55-115 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

a revolution. "We are even convinced," said the memorandum, "that it will take many years and require many individual — or perhaps even general — explosions, to achieve the equality we visualise." In the first place, Kropotkin believed, a party should be formed, which should not cause an uprising, but only prepare it among the people, because a revolution can be successful only when the need for it is understood by the peasants and workers. In the memorandum he raised the question of strikes, though he believed that "the task to be set before the workers was no longer an improvement of life, but the handing over of the tools of labour to the workers themselves".¹

But the police came upon the tracks of the Chaikovsky group. Kravchinsky and Klements were compelled to leave the city, but Kropotkin could not abandon the big and important work before he handed down to someone else the provincial network of groups, his ties with foreign countries, and ways of smuggling in literature, codes and addresses.

Kropotkin recalled how he, on receiving two new members in the group, spent days and nights, making them learn by heart hundreds of addresses and codes, after which, having changed his clothes, he showed the new men round the suburbs of St. Petersburg, acquainting them with workers. Meanwhile the ring was tightening round him. He began to notice that his house in the Malaya Morskaya Street was under surveillance. Once he saw from the window an unreliable man from among the weavers, who had recently been arrested. The only reasonable way out was to flee, or at least to change his residence. He did not use that chance.

A meeting of the Geographical Society, at which Kropotkin was to make a report, was scheduled for 21 March 1874. "It was known that I was going to present certain ideas about the extension of the ice cap as far as Middle Russia, and our geologists, with the exception of my friend and teacher, Fried-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

rich Schmidt, considered this speculation of a far too reaching character, and wanted to have it thoroughly discussed. For one week more, consequently, I could not go away.”¹

The meeting was held as planned. “I was proposed at that meeting to be nominated president of the Physical Geography section, while I was asking myself whether I would not spend that very night in the prison of the Third Section.”² But it was the next night that he spent in the Third Section. When next evening he safely left his home through the back door, took a horse-drawn cab and rode along the Nevsky Avenue, he discovered he was being chased. In the cab following him he was surprised to see, again, a recently arrested weaver sitting next to an unknown man.

“He [the weaver] waved his hand as if he had something to tell me. I told my cabman to stop. ‘Perhaps,’ I thought, ‘he has been released from arrest, and has an important communication to make to me.’ But as soon as we stopped, the man who was with the weaver — he was a detective — shouted loudly, ‘Mr. Borodin, Prince Kropotkin, I arrest you!’ He made a signal to the policemen, of whom there are hosts along the main thoroughfare of St. Petersburg... Resistance was impossible — a couple of policemen were already close by...”³

The Peter and Paul Fortress — a prison to which all generations of Russian revolutionaries were always sent — opened its heavy gates before Kropotkin. A dark solitary cell became his living place for a long time, while the prison robe, woolen socks and huge yellow shoes were his clothing now.

In a few months Kropotkin’s friends in the Geographical Society and his brother Alexander got a permission for him to continue the work on preparing his geographic writings for publication. The work in the poorly lit room, especially his work with maps, was hard, but it gave great satisfaction to the prisoner

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, p. 125.

² *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

and, while exhausting him physically, it supported him morally.

Meanwhile his health was growing ever worse. In his second year in prison, due to rheumatism and scurvy, appalling dampness in the cell, and extremely brief walks in the yard of the Trubetskoy Bastion, Kropotkin was unable to do the physical exercises he had invented for himself, and after some time he could not even move. The prison administration was soon compelled to send him to the Nikolayevsky military hospital.

The prison section of the hospital where he was treated was a paradise to him. A large window, open wide, with bars on it, a spacious yard overgrown with green grass and, most important, the open hospital gates, which were guarded, though — all that produced a sense of space and gave hope for an escape. He was recovering quickly but concealed that from the guards and would slowly drag his feet during the walks. He knew he had to stay in the hospital as long as he could, for it was only from there that he could hope to escape.

He planned the escape himself, in general terms. The rest depended on the intelligence, money, organisation and resourcefulness of his friends outside. All these qualities were splendidly displayed, and his escape became one of the most exciting episodes in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement.

"The escape was a lucky one not only because it gave Kropotkin freedom," wrote Alexander Ivanchin-Pisarev, a member of the Narodnik movement, "but also because no trace was left of those who took part in that excellent operation. Later some of them were brought to political trials, and were sentenced to terms of hard labour and to administrative exile, but during the investigation of their cases none of them was charged with complicity in arranging Kropotkin's escape."¹

¹ A. Ivanchin-Pisarev, "Escape of Prince Petr Kropotkin" in: *Byloye*, No. 1, 1907, p. 38 (in Russian).

The mastermind of the operation was doctor Orest Weimar, a friend of Kropotkin's. Brave, intelligent, and freedom-loving, he was liked by many revolutionaries. The house of doctor Weimar, his private orthopaedic clinic in the Nevsky Avenue, and his country house near St. Petersburg proved very useful for the revolutionaries. They were used for the escape as well.

Another person most active in that undertaking was M. P. Leschern von Gerzfeldt, a member of the Narodnik movement who did not know Kropotkin personally.

According to the plan, a carriage was to wait for Kropotkin at the open gates of the hospital during one of his regular walks. Following a signal to be given by one of his saviours, he would throw off his prison robe and rush through the gates, risking being shot by a guard, and jump into the carriage.

His friends had bought a first-rate trotter, Barbarian by name, which only recently had won horse racing prizes in St. Petersburg. The money — 2,500 roubles — were paid by the Chaikovsky group. A good carriage and gear were bought, too.

Then they had to find a place from which to observe the hospital yard and the street. A house opposite the hospital suited the purpose well. Luckily, a flat was rented there. It was immediately taken by Leschern and student E. Weimar, a brother of Orest Weimar.

Initially it was decided to give a sign to Kropotkin by letting a toy balloon into the air.

Kropotkin recalled later how on 29 July, the day fixed for the escape, he was waiting for the signal with a thumping heart. "Half an hour passed. I heard the rumble of a carriage in the street; I heard a man's voice singing a song unknown to me; but there was no balloon."¹

At that moment Leschern could not make the balloon fly. "The day was hot and windless," she wrote, "and the balloon would not go up."² The situation

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, p. 170.

² M. P. Leschern von Herzfeldt, "Reminiscences of the Escape of P. A. Kropotkin" in the collection *To the Memory of Petr Kropotkin*, Petrograd, Moscow, 1921, p. 77 (in Russian).

was desperate. The carriage was already noticed by the sentry officer. Perhaps, the guards got suspicious, too, since they checked if the sentries had combat cartridges. Kropotkin could be taken back to prison any time.

On the next day another plan was devised, and executed. This time the signal was to be given by the student, E. Weimar, who would be playing a violin. At that time his brother Orest and a lady would ride in the carriage towards the hospital, the lady would enter the building, and he would be waiting for her. Their people were to be placed along the route over two kilometres long, signalling to each other if the way would be clear.

Sofia Lavrova, an old friend of Kropotkin's, agreed to pass the new plan over to him. A brave woman, she used to visit the hospital before, without permission from the prison administration. Her visits were all the more risky since she had long been looked for by the police. On the day when the first attempt failed, she went to the prison section of the hospital with a coded message hidden in a watch. She passed the watch through a guard and, going back past the window of Kropotkin's cell, she cried out to him, "Don't forget to check the watch."

At four o'clock on the following day Kropotkin went for a walk. In a while he heard the sound of a violin — someone was playing a mazurka by Polish composer Apolinary Kątski. Walking slowly, he reached the place from which the distance to the gates was the shortest, threw off the prison robe and rushed towards the exit. The sentry, and the peasants unloading timber in the corner of the yard, ran after him. "The sentry ... was so sure that he could stop me in this way that he did not fire. But I kept my distance..."

As he ran through the gates, he saw the carriage, but did not recognise Weimar who was wearing a fancy nobleman's cap.

"'Jump in, quick, quick!' he shouted in a terrible voice, calling me and the coachman all sorts of names, a revolver in his hand and ready to shoot. ... Scores of voices yelling 'Hold them! Get them!' resounded

behind us, my friend meanwhile helping me to put on an elegant overcoat and an opera hat.”¹

The soldier who was in the street at the moment was talking excitedly with Yuri Bogdanovich. Making out like a simpleton, Bogdanovich was asking the soldier about his former job in the hospital laboratory. “My soldier, who knew a little about the microscope, was too excited explaining what could be seen through it — stretching his hands out, a rifle in one hand, saying ‘you see a louse that big through that glass.’ At that moment Kropotkin ran through the gates and jumped into the carriage.”²

The next danger — a policeman on the Slonovaya Street — was overcome, too. The young man who was to take care of the policeman had learnt that the policeman rented a room. He told him he would take it. “Show me that room of yours,” he asked, “I would take it right away.” “I can’t go now. You never know when a police officer pops up,” the policeman said. “Come on,” insisted the young man, “we won’t be long.”³

At the corner a block away Aaron Zundeleovich, a revolutionary, was sitting on a stone, a capful of cherries in his lap. He was eating the cherries, thus giving a sign that the way was clear. He would have stopped eating in case of danger.

“We trotted through a narrow lane... Two gendarmes were standing there, at the door of a public-house, and gave to the military cap of my companion the military salute. ‘Hush! hush!’ I said to him,” Kropotkin recalled, “for he was still terribly excited. ‘All goes well; the gendarmes salute us!’ The coachman thereupon turned his face towards me, and I recognised in him another friend, who smiled with happiness.”⁴ The friend was Mark Natanson, a well-known Narodnik.

The carriage was in the Nevsky Avenue now, then it turned into a side street and stopped at a house with a through-passage in the yard. The horse Barba-

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, pp. 174-75.

² A. Ivanchin-Pisarev, *op. cit.*, p. 40 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴ P. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

rian was left there. The escapee spent a few minutes in an apartment where Sofia Lavrova was waiting for him, greatly worried. Then, accompanied by a friend, he left through another gate, and, hiring a cab, went for a ride to the Islands. He spent the evening at Donon's, a fashionable and expensive restaurant. The calculation was correct. The police looked for him in the homes of his friends, in the streets, at the railway station, but not at Donon's.

In a few days, which he spent in the country house near St. Petersburg, Kropotkin was provided with a passport to the name of Levashov, and left for Finland, and from there on to Sweden.

The Peter and Paul Fortress was a thing of the past to him for good.

* * *

His first stay in London in 1876 did not last long. Revolutionary interests led Kropotkin to Switzerland, to his friends in the Jura Federation of the International. He settled in a small town of La Chaux-de-Fonds. There he became good friends with Commune Elisée Reclus, a well-known scientist and a member of the Jura Federation.

Kropotkin regarded his friend as a philosopher of encyclopaedic learning. A geographer and biologist, an explorer and philosopher, Reclus was a man of great moral purity and charisma, "the man who inspires others, but never has governed anyone, and never will do so; the anarchist whose anarchism is the epitome of his broad, intimate knowledge of the forms of life of mankind...".¹

The experience of Elisée Reclus, who for several years studied the way of life, fauna and flora of the Amazon area, had written several scientific works and combined science with revolutionary activities, was fairly close to the life experience of Petr Kropotkin. The study of all forms of life on the Earth led both of them to defending natural freedom and principles

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

of mutual aid and solidarity which reign among all living beings.

Short distances between Swiss cities allowed Kropotkin to make quite frequent visits to Guillaume in Neuchatel and Adhémar Schwitzguébel in Saint-Imier. On 18 March 1877, Jura Federation members joined the demonstration in Bern commemorating an anniversary of the Paris Commune. By that time reaction had reached so wide proportions, even in Switzerland, that people were forbidden to appear in the streets with a red banner. But the revolutionaries in Bern were determined to carry a red banner of revolution along the streets, right to the hall where a meeting was to be held.

Kropotkin wrote to his friend Paul Robin three days later: "The Bern action came off very well... We went out into the streets at 1:40 to march to the railway station and join forces with those arriving from Zurich on the 1:50 train. We — there were about one hundred of us — left the Hotel Soley and marched with a red banner. All was quiet. No police were in sight. We reached the railway station to learn that the train would be a few minutes late. A huge crowd of about 2,000 people had already gathered in front of the station.

"The demonstrators from Zurich emerged from the station with their old torn banner. Those who carried banners stood at the head of the demonstration. The music sounded, and we started the march. Suddenly the standard-bearers were approached by the prefect of Bern and a police inspector who demanded that the banners be put away and the people disperse. Our standard-bearer Schwitz (Adhémar Schwitzguébel) entered into negotiations with them. As he was speaking with the prefect, the gendarmes attacked Schwitz, trying to take the banner away from him. They knocked him down, but he clutched the banner. The Zurich people managed to carry their own banner away. I marched in the third row together with my Russian friends, and when we saw Schwitz knocked down, we rushed to save the banner. The demonstrators attacked the gendarmes hitting them with their fists. The gendarmes drew their sabres, wounding in the head one Russian (Zemfir Ralli) and one Frenchman (Jallau)... A scuffle broke out over the

Zurich banner, too. Seven gendarmes and five demonstrators were wounded... In the end, the gendarmes overpowered Schwitz and they carried the banner away. At that moment a few Russians — among whom was the former speaker at the Kazan Cathedral [in St. Petersburg — *Ed.*] who stayed in Geneva [the man was G. V. Plekhanov] — assaulted the gendarmes, preventing them from getting away with the banner until Pendi and Spichiger came to help them to regain it, and soon the banner, was in our hands.

"We held out about ten minutes around the torn banner. There were five of us: Pendi, Spichiger, a man from Zurich, myself and my friend Lenz [Klements]. Luckily, none of us had produced weapons (Lenz and myself did not have them). Being only five against the gendarmes, we would have been killed, should we decide to shoot at them.

"The scuffle lasted a few minutes; Pendi and Spichiger were staving off the gendarmes, hitting them with their legs, I held the banner in one hand and with the other one I was hitting the young man who attacked Spichiger. The gendarmes soon received a reinforcement and seized the banner. The rest of our comrades were pushed way back from us. We tried to catch the gendarme who was running away with the banner, but he reached the police post first.

"The demonstration was dispersed but, I think, our cause was a success. That day the meeting was attended not by 100 or 200 people, as usual, but by 2,000. Instead of indifferent onlookers we had an attentive audience that partly sympathised with us. Nothing can win over people more than courage."¹

The rapid development of socialist thought led Kropotkin to Paris. The trade union movement was growing in France; it produced syndicates as the only possible form of organising workers on a large scale. The movement was joined by all politically active elements of the working class that survived the reprisals following the defeat of the Paris Commune.

¹ *Central State Archives of the October Revolution*, fund 1129, inventory 2, unit of deposit 140.

In Paris, Kropotkin met Andréa Costa, a Bakunist from Italy; Jules Guesde, a well-known figure in the French socialist movement who in the 1870s joined the Bakuninists, and some of his friends.

"We started the first socialist groups," wrote Kropotkin, recalling his activities at that time. He usually called the anarchic movement "socialist". In that particular case he meant the setting up of an anarchic group for propaganda. "There were not twenty of us to carry on the movement, not two hundred openly to support it."¹

But soon even this small number of revolutionaries was on the wane. In the spring of 1878, the anniversary of the Commune set off a new wave of repressions. Costa and some other anarchists were arrested in April. Kropotkin escaped detention by chance: he was looked for under the name of Levashov, but was registered in the hotel under his real name.

Still, he had to leave France for Switzerland. This time he took up his residence in Geneva. There was nothing left, in fact, to be done in the Jura Mountains. The repressions launched by the Swiss authorities made Schwitzguébel and Spichiger leave the movement, Guillaume had to emigrate to France, and Paul Brousse, the editor of *L'Avant-Garde*, a paper of the Jura Federation, was put on trial.

"It so happened that I, a foreigner, had to undertake the editing of a paper for the federation."² Everything had to be started from scratch. Kropotkin once made an interesting admission. If I had a prospect of reinforcing a strong party in Western Europe by my own membership in it, he said, I would hardly be there. I would go where I would have to plough virgin soil.

Romanic-speaking countries became the chief arena for his activities. As was testified by Lev Deutsch, a Russian revolutionary, Kropotkin "put all his heart"³ into the dissemination of revolutionary ideas in French. The organ of that propaganda work was the

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, pp. 214, 215.

² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

³ L. G. Deutsch, *Russian Revolutionary Emigrants in the 1870s*, Petrograd, 1920, p. 11 (in Russian).

newspaper *Le Révolté* founded by him in February 1879.

"I thought," Kropotkin wrote, "that a revolutionary paper must be, above all, a record of those symptoms which everywhere announce the coming of a new era, the termination of new forms of social life... To make one feel sympathy with the throbbing of the human heart all over the world, with its revolt against age-old injustice, with its attempts at working out new forms of life — this should be the chief duty of a revolutionary paper."¹

Was the propaganda campaign launched by Kropotkin in *Le Révolté* effective? To a certain extent it was. The newspaper reached its top circulation of two thousand at that time. It was distributed in France and Switzerland.

* * *

In 1878, Petr Kropotkin fell deeply in love, for the first time in his life, at the age of 36. His chosen one was Sofia Ananyeva-Rabinovich, a 17 year-old girl who had arrived to Switzerland (from Tomsk) to study. "That marriage," wrote Lev Deutsch, "was a very happy one, despite the age difference."² For the rest of his life, which had pretty hard periods in it, Sofia remained his true friend. Speculating about his attitude to love and marriage, he spoke with gratitude about Russian writer Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev's *On the Eve*, he wrote, determined my attitude to women since my earliest years, and if I had rare luck to find a wife I love and to live with her happily over twenty years, I owe all this to Turgenev.

Kropotkin was a great admirer of Turgenev. Besides, they were friends. Turgenev, for his part, liked the humanism and artistic character of Kropotkin. Kropotkin's niece Yekaterina Polovtseva once said during a visit to Turgenev that she had heard there was a semblance between Kropotkin and Bazarov (a character from Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*). "No,

¹ P. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-28.

² L. G. Deutsch, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

that's absolutely wrong,' Turgenev replied, 'I think Kropotkin is quite different: if the lot would fall to him and he would have to commit an act of terrorism, and if on his way he would hear a nightingale singing its song, I think he would certainly stop and...'

" 'And what?' I waited impatiently for the end of the phrase.

" 'I'm not sure if he would commit a terroristic act. No, he has nothing in common with Bazarov... His education, elegance and, the main thing, his tender artistic heart...' " ¹

Soon after they married the Kropotkins moved from noisy Geneva to quiet Clarain. "Here," wrote Kropotkin, "aided by my wife, with whom I used to discuss every event and every proposed paper, and who was a severe critic of my writings, I produced the best things that I wrote for *Le Révolté*. ... In fact, I worked out here the foundation of nearly all that I have written later on." ²

Kropotkin had to work in conditions of severe reaction, which after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by members of the Narodnaya Volya (People's Will) was rampant not only in Russia, but also in all European countries.

Kropotkin was not in favour of terrorism. But when the Executive Committee of Narodnaya Volya, which regarded terrorism against the tsar and against the upper crust of the empire as a method of revolutionary struggle, was set up in Russia in response to the government's acts of repression, he considered it his duty to stand up for them and share the responsibility for their actions. That is why, after the arrest of Narodnaya Volya members, Kropotkin did everything in his power to win the support of European public opinion for Russian revolutionaries.

"Here in Geneva we are campaigning for arousing protest against the outrage in Russia," he wrote to Petr Lavrov on 17 April 1881. "A big action of protest — posters will be put up — will be staged tomorrow... After that a meeting will be held. Paris and London

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 103 (in Russian).

² P. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

should follow suit. Dear Petr Lavrovich, will you undertake to arrange this?... Could you call on Victor Hugo to help us? I will write a few words to Henri Rochefort, but there is little hope he would cooperate... European public opinion should be stirred up against the Russian tsar.”

Kropotkin's activities caused the dissatisfaction of all European governments. The Federal Council of Switzerland told him to leave the country immediately. That was in July 1881, when he returned from London where he had addressed an anarchist congress. The Kropotkins did not want to leave Switzerland: Kropotkin himself was bound up in publishing the newspaper and in the work with Elisée Reclus on *Géographie Universelle* (World Geography), while his wife Sofia lived in Clarain and studied in Bern. However, they had to obey the government's decision. They left Clarain and took up a residence on the French bank of the Lake Geneva, in a small town of Thonon-les-Bains.

Russian reaction did not stop the persecutions. But this time it acted in a new way.

Two weeks after the assassination of Alexander II a group of monarchists — Count Pavel Shuvalov, Count Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, Prince I. P. Shcherbatov, and others — set up a secret organisation called *Svyashchennaya Druzhina* (Sacred Squad). Apart from providing the personal protection of the tsar and his family, it planned to launch an all-out struggle against the revolutionary movement. This organisation set out to mystify and mislead the revolutionaries, and sow distrust among them. Terrorism was among its methods in the struggle against revolutionaries. One of its first acts was that it passed a death sentence on Kropotkin, who was mistakenly considered to be the man behind the revolutionary terrorism of the *Narodnaya Volya* group. In the summer of 1881, the Sacred Squad sent its agent abroad to execute the sentence. But Kropotkin was warned in good time. Russian writer Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin had been tipped off about the “death sentence” by M. T. Loris-Melikov, Minister of the Interior, and informed Kropotkin about

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 105 (in Russian).

the coming danger through Petr Lavrov. Kropotkin received warnings from other sources as well.

Later, in 1918, he described his attitude to a possibility of being killed by a hostile political party in a letter to Lenin. "All political leaders, all who have found themselves on the crest of the revolutionary wave, should know that they constantly, every day, run the risk of becoming a victim of political assassination: this is part of their life, like the risk involved in the work of an engine-driver. ... In America, when passions run high there, all major political party leaders live this way. I personally experienced this long ago, at the time of the Sacred Squad of Alexander III."¹ But even with a calm and reasonable attitude to possible danger, a life under a threat of assassination and constant surveillance by Russian spies was tiresome and unpleasant. The French police grew more aggressive. A few actions by groups of militant anarchists, above all the explosions in Lyons, which Kropotkin had nothing to do with, made his life more dangerous. Anarchist leaders began to be arrested. In December 1882, the home of the Kropotkins was searched, Sofia was detained and searched, too. Kropotkin had time to escape, but decided not to do that. It was hard and tiresome to hide from the Russian, Swiss, and now French authorities.

He was arrested on 22 December 1882. At the trial held in Lyon next January he was sentenced to five years in prison for "membership in the International". The charge was ridiculous, to say the least. The International no longer existed, and the law banning participation in it was not valid. But the French authorities, pressed by the Russian government, insisted on that sentence. Neither the protests lodged by the left-wing members of parliament, nor the appeal submitted by outstanding public figures of France and signed, among others, by Herbert Spencer, Victor Hugo, Ernest Renan, and Algernon Swinburne proved helpful.

Kropotkin remained in the Lyons prison two months after the trial. The conditions in the prison were bad and his poor health grew much worse.

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 106 (in Russian).

Sofia Kropotkina asked Petr Lavrov to solicit Georges Clemenceau, the head of the opposition to the French government, for demanding a transfer of her husband at least to a prison in Paris. She wrote to Lavrov on 20 January 1883: "Today I saw my husband through three gratings. We had to shout at the pitch of our breath because of the terrible noise there. Anyway we could hear each other and discussed what was necessary."¹ In the middle of March, Kropotkin and other twenty-one prisoners sentenced at the Lyons trial were transferred to a prison in Clairvaux — a former monastery of Bernardine monks, which during the revolution was used as an asylum. Kropotkin's one-man cell was somewhat better than his cell in the Peter and Paul Fortress, and the conditions there were a bit better, too; but nonetheless in a year his health worsened to a dangerous point. He suffered from pain in the side, scurvy and malaria. The campaign for his release in the press, though it did not bring him freedom, caused an improvement of his conditions in Clairvaux. His wife now could bring him dinners from a restaurant and spend a few hours a day with him in the presence of a guard. She moved to Clairvaux and lived in a house near the prison. Kropotkin soon recovered and began to work as usual. When it became known in Paris that he needed books, "the Academy of Sciences offered the use of its library, and Ernest Renan, in a charming letter, put his private library at her [Kropotkin's wife.—*Ed.*] service."²

Apart from scientific studies, he worked in a small prison garden, sometimes played skittles and ball, and read for his prison mates lectures on cosmography, geometry and physics, and helped them to learn foreign languages. Another year passed that way.

The campaigns in the press for the release of Kropotkin and Louise Michel, a famous Communard convinced at the same time, did not abate. Finally, Kropotkin was set free in mid-January 1886, having spent three years in prison.

My release, he wrote, was also a release of my wife

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 108 (in Russian).

² P. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 273.

from her voluntary confinement in a village near the prison.

The Kropotkins first went to Paris, where they stayed with Elie Reclus (the elder brother of Elisée Reclus) who had earlier visited them in Clairvaux. Elie Reclus was an anthropologist and ethnographer who had participated in the Commune. He was a man of great courage and high moral principles. Like his brother, he was a close friend of Kropotkin's.

However, having "enjoyed" the hospitality of the French authorities to the full, Kropotkin did not want to remain in France. In the spring of 1886 he and his wife moved to London, and Britain was a refuge for the Russian exile for many years to come.

* * *

The image of Kropotkin as a revolutionary and scientist took its final shape during his life in Britain. He was in his late forties, when the travels, prisons, and wandering from country to country were a thing of the past, that he concentrated on theory.

Kropotkin defined his theory of anarchism as "anarchic communism". The ideas of utopian communism, blended with anarchic ideas, were perceived by him to a certain extent under the influence of Bakunin.

He took almost an equal interest in the theory of revolutionary struggle and in biological, economic and social sciences. His views were marked by a sense of harmony and unity of the world and he was occupied with a synthetic analysis of various forms of life. "Anarchism," he wrote, "is a conception of the Universe based on the mechanical¹ interpretation of phenomena, which comprises the whole of Nature, including the life of human societies and their economic, political, and moral problems. Its method is that of natural sciences, and every conclusion it comes to must be verified by this method if it pretends to be scientific. Its tendency is to work out a synthetic

¹ "It would have been better to say 'kinetic', but this expression is less known." (A note by Kropotkin).

philosophy which will take in all facts of Nature, including the life of societies.”¹ Was this fundamental feature of his doctrine original? There is, perhaps, no simple answer to this question. What was original in it was his attempts to formulate a bio-sociological law of mutual assistance and solidarity and the extent to which the method of natural sciences was used, but, on the whole, questions related to the synthesis of sciences, to the organic unity of living nature and the social world had been raised before. Bakunin, who had anticipated Kropotkin in these questions, possibly had a definite influence on him.

No doubt, the revolution in the natural sciences in the mid-19th century, that is, in the sphere which interested Kropotkin as a scientist, inevitably influenced all his views. And he could not but be influenced by those who attempted to synthesise sciences before him: to some extent by Auguste Comte and to a greater extent by Herbert Spencer.

It was way back in 1863 that Kropotkin had first paid attention to the origin of species. “I have long been thinking a great deal about the origin of vegetable and animal species, when I admired plants and insects here,”² he wrote to his brother Alexander. That interest was due to the great power of observation of Kropotkin who noticed two distinctive features in the animal life in Eastern Siberia. On the one hand, the severe natural conditions caused definite forms of struggle for existence and, on the other, that struggle was absent within one and the same species.

In the 1860s and 1870s argument raged in the European and Russian press around the ideas of Charles Darwin. Addressing the congress of naturalists and physicians, zoologist Karl Kessler, dean of St. Petersburg University, asserted, referring to Darwin, that the law of mutual aid, and not that of mutual struggle, had the main role to play in the progressive evolution of species.

¹ Petr Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, Freedom Press, London, 1912, p. 38.

² Petr and Alexander Kropotkin, *Correspondence*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1933, p. 123 (in Russian).

When he served a term in the French prison, Kropotkin read a speech by Karl Kessler.¹ He was struck to learn how much his own observations coincided with Kessler's conclusions, and was indignant at those followers of Darwinism who turned it to a different direction.

In *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* Darwin wrote that the struggle for existence should be understood in the broadest sense, including dependence of one animal on another. Though Darwin did use the words "struggle for existence" for his own purpose, primarily in the narrow sense, "he warned his followers," Kropotkin observed, "against committing the error ... of overrating its narrow meaning. In *The Descent of Man* he gave some powerful pages to illustrate its proper, wide sense. He pointed out how, in numberless animal societies, the struggle between separate individuals for the means of existence disappears, how *struggle* is replaced by *co-operation*, and how that substitution results in the development of intellectual and moral faculties which secure to the species the best conditions for survival."²

Continuing this line of Darwinism, Kropotkin concentrated on the social instinct of animals and on the same instinct inherent in the primitive man, the moral aspect in man, which is nothing else than the further development of the instinct of sociableness typical of nearly all living beings and observed in entire living nature.

This proposition of Kropotkin's, which made up the basis of his ethics (he had begun to work on in the 1890s), was part of his general concept of mutual aid and solidarity as a law governing the development of life on earth. He formulated his ideas about that in a series of articles which were included in his book *Mutual Aid. A Factor of Evolution* published in Britain in 1902 and in Russia two years later.

The publication of his articles, and then the book,

¹ K. F. Kessler, "On the Law of Mutual Aid" in: *Studies of the St. Petersburg Society of Naturalists*, Vol. XI, Issue I, 1880 (in Russian).

² P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid. A Factor of Evolution*, William Heinemann, London, 1904, p. 2.

aroused a debate in the scientific quarters. Many did not agree with his interpretation of Darwin's theory. This is what he wrote about it in August 1909: "I may be mistaken in my conclusions and exaggerate the significance of the public in the evolution of the animal world... But the facts — not my observations, but quotations from ... writings by great naturalists, the fathers of descriptive zoology... And one more interesting thing: Kessler, Severtsov, Menzbir and Brandt — the four great Russian zoologists, and the fifth one, Polyakov, who is not so great, and finally myself, just an explorer — have come out against Darwin's exaggeration of struggle within a species. We see a great deal of mutual aid where Darwin and Wallace see only struggle."¹

It is not struggle but mutual aid and support rendered in most different, and not in the least state, forms that move life ahead. He urged people to see that "already now, Europe is covered by thousands of voluntary associations ... for all that makes up the life of an active and thinking being".²

Thus the biological law of mutual aid was formulated by Kropotkin as a sociological, or even bio-sociological one; and he tried to explain the anti-state sentiments, allegedly inherent in man, by people's natural norms of conduct in society. But while the application of the bio-sociological law to substantiate the anti-state doctrine was not very convincing, Kropotkin's biological and bio-sociological ideas in themselves were much valuable.

He made a humanistic attempt to analyse the history of mankind from the positions of mutual aid and solidarity. His idea of the origin of ethics and the role of morals in the evolution of man is most fruitful.

Academician Boris Astaurov, a Soviet geneticist, called Kropotkin "an outstanding Russian philosopher, a Darwinist and revolutionary", and wrote that in his articles and the book on mutual aid "we again heard

¹ A Letter by Petr Kropotkin to M. I. Goldsmith in: N. M. Pirumova, *Petr Kropotkin*, p. 125 (in Russian).

² Petr Kropotkin, "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal", *Freedom Pamphlets*, No. 10, London, 1897, p. 18.

Darwin's main theme of the group natural selection of social instincts — the 'instincts of humaneness' — but this theme was fully developed in Kropotkin's still more remarkable book *Ethics*, interrupted at half a phrase, and its first volume, *The Origin and Evolution of Morals* (1922), was his swan song."¹

Explaining why it was necessary to work on ethics, Kropotkin wrote: "A new realistic science on morals free from religious dogmas, superstitions and metaphysical myths — the way modern natural-science philosophy has already been freed — and inspired by most noble feelings and bright hopes which we derive from our present-day knowledge of man and his history — this is what mankind insistently demands."² Kropotkin's ethics, based on the theory of mutual aid and solidarity, which is a humanistic trend in Darwinism, has lost none of its significance to this day.

Soviet scientist Vladimir Efroimson, who backed up Kropotkin's idea that man's moral emotions are generated and consolidated by the law of natural selection, writes: "If the complex of conscience is programmed by selection, this means that it is indestructible, that its roots are stronger than predatory instincts and instincts of self-preservation giving rise to indifference and cowardice, that sooner or later it will prevail, and true humanism, which never faded away, even in the gloomiest periods of tyranny and misinformation, ... will triumph in society."³

Having adopted a "thinking method of natural sciences" and united the principles of organising all living communities on earth, Kropotkin arrived at the conclusion that only a free life of human society without the state can be natural.

But anarchy, according to Kropotkin, is not only a world outlook but also a creative force of the people.

¹ B. Astaurov, "*Homo sapiens et hymanys* — The Outstanding Man and the Evolutionary Genetics of Humaneness", in: *Novyy Mir*, No. 10, 1971, p. 222.

² Petr Kropotkin, *Ethics*, Petrograd-Moscow, 1922, p. 6 (in Russian).

³ V. P. Efroimson, "The Evolutionary-Genetic Origin of Altruistic Emotions", in: *Nauchnaya Mysl*, Novosti Press Agency Bulletin, Moscow, 1968, Issue II, p. 38.

"This creative force will come only from among the popular masses, from those who procure, process and change the products of nature with their own hands and together they make up a society of producers.

"The creative force of a social revolution cannot come from books and scientific treatises. Books ... sometimes can arouse a spirit of criticism and indignation, but they cannot foresee the future and draw up a plan of a new life. To do that one is to follow the suggestions of life itself."¹ Only the popular masses can speak the voice of life. In Kropotkin's sociological concept priority is given not to the individual as such, but to the masses with their creative activity. Only the masses can combine reason and instinct, which is never wrong. Only the masses can create forms of life based on freedom and justice. The popular masses alone have created the human world, and it is among the masses, he believed, that anarchism was born.

Kropotkin regarded the popular masses, their wishes and their reason, with profound respect. The main factor in all social questions, he believed, is: do people want this or that? If they do, then how much do they want it? How many of them are there? What forces are they confronted with? His humanism was directed towards the masses, while the role of the individual seemed to remain in the shadow. In his work *Modern Science and Anarchism* he mentioned the individual factor and, just saying that its significance was quite well known, immediately concentrated on the psychology and creative activity of the popular masses. With that approach, stressing mutual aid and solidarity as the main features of the masses, other qualities, vigorous and diverse though they are, were sometimes lost. Nor did he single out the clearly existing antagonistic groups among people, nor did he speak of the stratification of the peasantry and of various strata within the working class. The people, the masses with all their positive creative activity, are confronted by the enemy of all life — the state based on exploitation, profit-seeking and unrestrained power.

¹ The foreword by P. A. Kropotkin to *International* by James Guillaume, Petrograd-Moscow, 1922, p. 12 (in Russian).

The entire history of mankind is full of irreconcilable antagonism between the positive creative activity of the masses and the exploiter policy of the states.

But it would be wrong to believe that Kropotkin did not ponder over the problem of the individual who would serve the masses but not the state. He could not go past this question at least because individual freedom was regarded to be the highest value in anarchist quarters.

In 1902 Kropotkin wrote to his friend Valerian Cherkezov, who shared his views: "What individualist anarchists call individualism is not individualism at all. Or at least it is silly individualism... I am going to prove that all who advocated individualism did not even understand what a powerfully developed individual is.

"...I would like to show a type of a really powerful individual. He defies the devil himself; but he doesn't want slave labour, he can't stand slavery, it disagrees with his nature of a Russian nihilist, and even inequality is morally repulsive to him...

"One cannot become a highly developed individual outside communist life. Like a hermit cannot become highly moral, so the individualist cannot become a highly developed individuality either. Individuality develops only in contact with a multitude of people, when one plunges in the life of people close to him and the life of the world — feeling, fighting, working." ¹

His ideas about the highly developed individual, which cannot exist outside the progressive struggle of mankind and which can fully develop only in communist life, was a response to the idea of personal freedom unlimited by society popular among anarchists, a response to a purely bourgeois individualism of the superman advocated by Friedrich Nietzsche.

These ideas gave rise to yet another aspect of the contradiction between the individual and society, the aspect developed by Kropotkin. Man should be free from the state, but he can never be free from society.

¹ *Katorga i ssylka* (Hard Labour and Exile), 1926, No. 25, pp. 11, 12, 13 (in Russian).

Communist society gives a maximum of freedom to man. However, Kropotkin believed, the communist form of social life should not subordinate the individual.

A maximum of freedom for the individual under communism without power will be accompanied by a maximum of the economic flourishing of society, because the productivity of emancipated labour will then be the highest.

In the conditions when all necessary requirements are met, the development of the individual can be all-round and complete. Anarchic communism, in the opinion of Kropotkin, gives "the full expansion of man's faculties, the superior development of what is original in him, the greatest fruitfulness of intelligence, feeling and will".¹

"We all," he said, "should live for the great cause — the triumph of justice and freedom, but for that we need courageous and moral individuals."² Therefore, considering that the popular masses play the main creative role in history, he believed that every man should develop his mind and will, preparing himself for serving society.

* * *

Theoretical elaboration of problems of anarchism was the main, but not the only, preoccupation of Kropotkin during his life in England. And though he said later that one could be active in revolutionary struggle until one reached the age of 40, he himself did not leave that activity for many years longer.

An energetic man, he could not be content only with studies at his desk. He wanted to see much, to know, watch and explore on the spot. Thus, before writing his economic and social propositions, he studied the big industry in Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham, visited coalfields and shipyards, had long talks

¹ Petr Kropotkin, "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal", p. 26.

² N. K. Lebedev, "P. A. Kropotkin — the Man, Philosopher and Revolutionary", in the collection *Petr Kropotkin*, Moscow, 1922, p. 12 (in Russian).

with workers and sometimes with the owners of factories and coal pits.

"In 1886 the socialist movement in England was in full swing,"¹ wrote Kropotkin about the situation at that time. It was only natural for him to join that movement at once. Speeches at workers' meetings, and dissemination of new ideas in print took up much of his time. Together with a group of English friends he founded the anarchist newspaper *Freedom*, the first one of its kind in England.

Propaganda activities had their specifics in England. "'We are a left-centre country, we live by compromises,' I was once told by an old member of Parliament, who had a wide experience of the life of his mother country,"² wrote Kropotkin in his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*. He soon saw this for himself. In France or Switzerland the workers were more interested in general principles and in their struggle they sought to achieve big results at once, whereas in England, "it was upon a series of palliative concessions ... that the chief weight was laid. But, on the other hand, ... what chiefly interested most of them [the workers. —*Ed.*] were matters of constructive realization, as well as how to attain the conditions which would make such realization possible."³ Such interests of the workers corresponded to the thinking of Kropotkin himself, and he specified with enthusiasm some or other propositions of his theory with regard to the life in England.

His life in that country was fairly good. Together with his wife and daughter Sasha he lived first in Harrow near London, and then the family moved to a small two-storeyed house in Bromley.

He spent most of the day in his study upstairs, and his wife Sofia did not allow anyone to enter it. Normally there were many visitors. As years passed by, the fame of the London refugee was growing. On arriving in London almost any educated Russian, and a foreigner, too, hurried to Bromley. "He was

¹ P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Vol. II, p. 310.

² *Ibid.*, p. 312.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

definitely the most popular man among the London emigrants,"¹ wrote Ivan Maisky.

Kropotkin's niece Nadezhda, who paid a visit to Bromley in 1903, told about foreigners and Russians of various convictions who came to his house. He was a kind man and received all, talking with his guests on end. He was so much carried away by his thoughts that did not notice that his listeners often could not even appreciate the significance of those conversations and his thoughts. His eyes were "very young and bright, his movements quick, he could laugh, play the fool and amuse himself with trifles like a very young man". After a long and serious conversation he could suddenly go over to "unrestrained merriment ... tell jokes and funny stories, acting them out. He seemed to be boiling inside, got excited during arguments and, despite his kindness, was sometimes even harsh and intolerant".

When he needed an information from a book during a conversation, "he would rush to his study upstairs and then run as quickly down the stairs".²

In his diverse activities in 1892-1901 he devoted much time to making reviews of new achievements in various areas of science, which he published in *The Nineteenth Century*. The scientific prestige of Kropotkin in England was great indeed.

In 1897 a regular congress of English scientists was called in Toronto, Canada. Kropotkin made his first trip to America to attend the congress. When the congress was over, he travelled much about the country and made geological exploration with enthusiasm, as in those remote years in Siberia. His *Canadian Diary* resembles his *Diary* of the Siberian period. It was the same large-scale observation of nature in all its diversity, of people and their ways of life. The geological picture of Canada struck him by its similarity with that of Siberia. Already on 5 August 1897, as the ship was approaching the western shores of Canada, he made the following entry in his diary, "We sailed across the Gulf of

¹ I. M. Maisky, *A Journey into the Past*, p. 126 (in Russian).

² N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57 (in Russian).

St. Lawrence... It is so much like Siberia with its hills, ... coniferous forests... The structure of the shores is extremely interesting." ¹ Further observations prompted him the idea that the continents of Asia and America are geologically similar.

His travel had yet another unexpected practical result.

In the late 1890s the West European press wrote much about the religious sect *Dukhobors* ² in Russia. Kropotkin had long been interested in that movement. Already when he lived in the Amur area, he watched the life of the *Dukhobors* who had been exiled there, and later described his observations in a chapter of *World Geography*.

Persecuted by the tsarist government, the *Dukhobors* decided in 1898 to move to a "promised land" where no one would prevent them from observing their religion. As he learned about that, Kropotkin wrote an article for the *Nineteenth Century* journal, saying that the climate and freedom in North-Western Canada made it a suitable place for a permanent residence of *Dukhobors*. Lev Tolstoy read that article and asked Kropotkin to help the *Dukhobors* to move to Canada. Kropotkin immediately wrote to Professor James Mavor in Toronto, asking him to negotiate the matter with the Canadian government. Soon the government issued a permission, and about eight thousand people moved to America in 1899.

In 1901, during his second travel to America, where he read a series of lectures on Russian literature in Boston, Kropotkin went to Canada for the second time and paid visits to the communes of *Dukhobors* to discover elements of communist organisation in their way of life.

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 157 (in Russian).

² A Christian sect that formed in Russia in the mid-18th century. The *Dukhobors* (fighters for the spirit) declared that their mission was to fight for the spirit. They said that religion was a cause of one's inner conviction, denied church rites and preached community of property and disobedience to local authorities. Many of them refused to serve in the army.

Time passed, and at the start of the 20th century the tide of the liberation movement in Russia was on the rise. Kropotkin longed to go home and join the struggle there. In that struggle it was not absolutely necessary to defend the ideal of anarchism. He wrote to Maria Goldsmith: "Wherever people rise against personal, economic, state, and especially national oppression, we must be with them."

He regarded the start of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907 as the "awakening of the popular masses".

In the pamphlet "The Revolution in Russia" issued in 1905 he wrote: "Another prominent feature of the Russian revolution is the ascendancy which Labour has taken in it. It is not Social Democrats, or Revolutionary Socialists, or Anarchists, who take the lead in the present revolution. It is Labour — the working men."¹ He did not foresee the complete victory of the struggle that had started, but only hoped that, according to the "law of human progress" at the time of a revolutionary storm, the people would win several liberties.

He formulated the law of progress during his work on the history of the French Revolution of 1789-1793: "If we represent the slow progress of a period of evolution by a line drawn on paper, we shall see this line gradually, though slowly, rising. Then there comes a Revolution, and the line makes a sudden leap upwards. ...However, at this height progress cannot be maintained; all the hostile forces league together against it, and the Republic goes down. Our line ... drops. Reaction follows...

"After that, evolution is resumed: our line again begins to rise slowly: but, besides taking place on a very much higher level, the rising of the line will in nearly every case be also much more rapid than before the period of disturbance.

¹ P. Kropotkin, "The Revolution in Russia". In: *The Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. 58, No. 346, December 1905, p. 880.

"This is a law of human progress, and also a law of individual progress."¹

Proceeding from his own quite substantial theoretical propositions and from the Russian reality at the start of the 20th century, Kropotkin said: "That the Russian revolution will not limit itself to a mere reform of political institutions, to solve the social problem, has always been my opinion. Half a century of socialist evolution in Europe cannot remain without influence upon the coming events... How far the social change will go, and what concrete forms it will take, I would not undertake to predict without being on the spot, in the midst of the workers; but steps in that direction are sure to be made."²

As the revolution was on the upswing, Kropotkin was preparing to go home. "We hope that our people will be amnestied and released from Shlisselburg and then we may go,"³ he wrote to Goldsmith on 4 November 1905. At the end of that month he wrote again: "I should move to Russia as soon as I can. They write to me: don't you come! Even Sonia Lavrova⁴ sends her *ordre categorique* not to come. But I think such reaction would not last long there, and I want to go by all means in a month."

9 January 1906: "Coming soon, i. e., early in February."

17 January 1906: "Thank you for the letter and the warning. Our acquaintances and friends write the same from everywhere. We have postponed our departure."

29 January 1906: "The news from Russia say the arrests are still all over the country."

16 May 1906: "We shall go in June perhaps... It's time to be in Russia. In France and here it will be getting worse and worse with time." But reaction was gathering strength. There was no question of

¹ P. A. Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789-1793*, Vol. II, Vanguard Press, New York, 1929, p. 576.

² P. Kropotkin, "The Revolution in Russia", *op. cit.*, p. 881.

³ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 170 (in Russian).

⁴ Russian revolutionary, member of the Narodnik movement.

coming back. In a letter to Kropotkin dated 3 February 1907, Sofia Lavrova summarised, as it were, the frustrated hopes of her friend: "It's good that you haven't packed and moved here. To hell with such a homeland!"¹

The years that followed the defeat of the revolution did not change Kropotkin's views. He carried on his peaceful advocacy of anarchism. But that work, too, was on the wane. Already in the summer of 1907 he had to think of ending the publication of the *Bread and Freedom* leaflets.

In 1908 Russian anarchists had the idea of issuing a journal entitled *Bread and Freedom*, and this time Kropotkin backed up the idea. Despite the defeat of the revolution, the movement reached a point when, he believed, the broad readership could, and had to, be addressed. But he refused the repeated requests of his friends who asked him to edit the journal. "I am old and want to finish some of my works," he wrote in that connection on 16 March 1908. "Now I shall not be able to take part in publishing a journal. I want to complete the *Ethics* and the general work on socialism and Anarchism."²

In a letter to Goldsmith dated 16 October 1911, Kropotkin briefly summed up what he thought about the experience of the anarchist movement during the revolution. "I thought a great deal all this time what the anarchists of Russia need at the moment.

"They need: a definite rejection of Jacobinic methods which in Russia have until now been mistaken for anarchy; namely: (1) rejection of expropriation as a way of acquiring money for revolutionary activity, and (2) unconditional rejection of *Bagrovshchina* [terror — *Ed.*] as a means of struggle against reaction.

"Then it is necessary, I think, to give up isolated, 'scattered' actions, ... as a means of 'raising the masses' by individual actions. It should be realised what is understood by the workers of the whole world — that if individual actions in the period of stagnation

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 170 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

were designed to make people think, then in the revolutionary period there must be group and mass actions by peasants and workers.”¹

* * *

A list of works written by Kropotkin during any year (especially in the 1890s and 1900s) looks like an assortment of diverse subjects. And if we add speeches to that, which were addressed to most different audiences, their subjects ranging from the ice age to expropriation during a revolution, it will look incredible that all that was the work of a single man who was old and not in good health.

He was mainly preoccupied with serious scientific work and was busy publishing his books. The flow of visitors, which did not diminish after the Kropotkins moved to Brighton in 1907, hampered his research. He complained to Goldsmith in July 1909: “The proofs, the visitors, and the letters. And now ... I had to stop.” He said that he had never had so many visitors — Americans, Russians, Germans — as during that period.

But the work could not wait. The first edition of *The Great French Revolution* was completed. Kropotkin wrote to Sofia Lavrova in September 1909: “The book has come out and looks not bad ... There are many editorial flaws, but it gives food for thought ... In a word, the book has started out. Now I will go over to *Ethics*.”²

But his work was not limited to *Ethics*, which he had thought over for several years. He worked on the philosophical substantiation of anarchism and tried to express his thoughts in a concise form understandable to the general reader. He wrote a multitude of articles — scientific ones for *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and research journals and political ones — and was busy preparing the publication of collected works by Mikhail Bakunin, whose writings he had already critically assessed.

“I absolutely agree with your opinion on Bakunin’s

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-76.

² *Ibid.*, p. 179.

writings — just imagine that!" he wrote to Cherkezov on 14 February 1912. "Since that time my views have so much crystallised — and life itself has corrected them — that his writings for us are too general and vague. But young people evidently find a good deal of new in them."¹

* * *

In 1912 Kropotkin turned 70. He had suffered serious illnesses, and his life was, on the whole, not easy, but he was bright and cheerful, energetic and capable of working much.

His appearance arrested the attention of all who met him for the first time. It impressed Ivan Maisky who visited him in Brighton: "A huge bare head with wisps of curly hair on the sides and a high forehead; a big nose; the clever sharp eyes under clearly outlined eyebrows; sparkling spectacles, a thick grey moustache, and a vast white bristling beard covering the upper part of the chest. All this gave one an impression of a curious blend of a prophet and a scientist."²

On 9 December, Kropotkin's 70th birthday was celebrated in a big way in many cities of Western Europe and America. An anniversary committee was set up for the occasion in England. It included well-known scientists and public figures. The address signed by the committee said:

"Your services in the cause of Physical Science, your contributions to Geographical and Geological discovery, your criticisms and extensions of the Darwinian theory of Evolution are matters of world-wide recognition, and have greatly enlarged our understanding of general Nature while your criticisms and emendations of current Political Economy have similarly widened our outlook on human and social life.

"You have taught us to rely in social life on that most important force, the voluntary principle,

¹ *Katorga i ssylka* (Hard Labour and Exile), 1926, No. 24, p. 18 (in Russian).

² I. M. Maisky, *op. cit.*, p. 132 (in Russian).

which has inspired so much of the best life in all ages of the world, and which is now among the modern societies taking its place as the leading factor in their development — in contradistinction to the merely regulative and governmental principle, which in the form of over-legislation certainly tends to render a people deficient in originality and initiative..."¹

The international meetings held in Paris and London were addressed with speeches of greeting by outstanding public figures. The meeting held in the big Pavilion Theatre in London was addressed by George Bernard Shaw, and among the speakers at a similar meeting in Paris was Ferdinand Buisson, a well-known French radical.

While Western Europe celebrated Kropotkin's anniversary, in Russia the only newspaper, *Utro Ros-sii* (The Morning of Russia) ventured to raise the question that some literary institution should make his return home possible. Kropotkin answered with a letter to the newspaper: "Let me tell you a few words about an article about me carried in the 268th issue of your respected newspaper.

"Entry into Russia is open to me since the amnesty announced on 20 October 1905."² But apart from me there are thousands of people abroad who love their country not less than I do and for whom life in a foreign land is far harder than it is for me. Meanwhile tens of thousands of people are scattered throughout Siberia and far away in the extreme North, they are isolated from real life and are dying in horrible conditions.

"To come back to Russia now would mean reconciliation with these conditions, which is inconceivable for me. The day when we all will be able to return to a free life in Russia will be the happiest day in my life, if I live that long, of course."³ That day

¹ N. K. Lebedev, *Petr Kropotkin*, Moscow, p. 65 (in Russian); Central State Archives of the October Revolution, fund 1129, inventory 1, file 15, sheet 15.

² Kropotkin was mistaken. According to the information provided by the Police Department in 1909, in case of his return he would have been arrested and taken to prison.

³ N. K. Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 67 (in Russian).

came after the victory of the February 1917 Revolution in Russia. Kropotkin's return home we described at the start of our story.

In Petrograd he spoke at meetings and, accompanied by his friends, he went around the city, recalling the past and watching the present. So many visitors came to the house on the Kamenny Ostrov (Stone Island), where the Kropotkins lived then, that he was unable to receive all. His niece Y. N. Polovtseva, his daughter and wife did all they could to help him. Kropotkin was often seen silent and pensive.

The Provisional Government was in a profound crisis. Looking for a way out, Premier Alexander Kerensky decided to turn to Kropotkin. This is what Y. N. Polovtseva recalled about it: "It was 4 July. We heard distant shots and animation of a crowd. Visitors came, all excited, each describing the events in his own way. Kropotkin grew ever more reticent and restrained.

"...One night, at about 11 p. m., Kerensky arrived and went straight to Kropotkin. Nobody knew what they talked about behind the closed doors, but some heavy mood, some burden was felt in the house... Kerensky went out and silently left.

"A while after that, Kropotkin came out to his people. He was indignant: 'I told him not to forget that I am an anarchist,' his voice was trembling with excitement. It turned out that Kerensky had come to ask Kropotkin to join the new government, but he left empty-handed."¹

That visit was described by Emma Goldman, a well-known anarchist, in her reminiscences about Kropotkin. "Kerensky," she wrote, "made incredible efforts to reconcile the irreconcilable: he tried to persuade Kropotkin to join the provisional government, offering him any ministerial post he would care to choose. Kropotkin refused. 'I think the work of a shoeblack is more honest and useful,' he said."²

Time passed by. The crisis of bourgeois power

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 192 (in Russian).

² *To the Memory of Petr Kropotkin*, Collection, Petrograd, Moscow, 1921, p. 120 (in Russian).

was growing ever worse. In August representatives of the ruling parties, big business and big landowners gathered in Moscow for a State Meeting. The socialist parties, too, were represented: the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. Kropotkin was among the invited. In his speech he set forth mainly the thesis he had briefly outlined in his rough notes: "Common terms. Call them for self-administration and work."¹

He did not return from Moscow to Petrograd. For some time he lived in the city, but when the battles began in November 1917, he and his family moved to a provincial town of Dmitrov. In a letter to Polovtseva he spoke of his emotional state and his studies.

"What I already experienced before, the same ruin, when I was writing the history of the French Revolution — and you know how vividly, materially, I imagine what I am writing about — saves me from pessimism. Through this ruin I see a new light for entire modern civilisation. But the labour pains are none the easier for that.

"I save myself by working much. The association for rapprochement with Britain and the League of Federalists we are setting up..., the lectures organised by the League, occasional speeches (made at a meeting of cooperators and elsewhere) and, finally, the publication of my writings — all this fills all my day."²

Kropotkin had a wonderful gift — an ever young heart. Almost childish clarity and naivety were combined in him with a penetrating mind and wisdom acquired with experience. Therefore, having preserved the clear mind and young heart, Kropotkin at the age of 73 and 74 could not be outside public life, he could not be uninvolved in the vast social upheavals in his homeland. He welcomed the October Revolution.

Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, his old London acquaintance who was now secretary of the Council of People's Commissars recalled how Kropotkin told

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

him his opinion of the current events during their very first meeting early in 1918: "Throughout the activities of modern political parties one should remember that the October movement of the proletariat, which culminated in the revolution, has proved to you that a social revolution is possible. And this worldwide gain should be protected by all means, while many other things may be foregone. The Bolshevik Party has done well by assuming an old and truly proletarian name: communist party. If it does not achieve all it wants to, it will illumine the path for civilised countries for at least one century. Its ideas would gradually be received by nations, just as the ideas of the French Revolution were received by the world in the 19th century. In this lies the great merit of the October Revolution." ¹

In the Conclusion to his book *The Great French Revolution* written in 1909 Kropotkin put this question: "Which of the nations will take upon herself the terrible but glorious task of the next great revolution?" Supposing that a revolution might take place in Russia, he wrote: "...if she [Russia.— *Ed.*] touches the land question in a revolutionary spirit — how far will she go? Will she know how to avoid the mistake made by the French Assembly and will she socialise the land and give it only to those who want to cultivate it with their own hands?" ²

In 1920 Kropotkin already knew that the Russian revolution not only avoided the mistake, but even "made a step ahead of France which stopped when it had to do what was called then actual equality (*egalite de fait*), that is, economic equality." ³

But one should not think that Kropotkin always welcomed new life everywhere. He remained above all an anarchist-communist and therefore could not recognise the need for the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat which were inevitable at that time. He did not understand and rejected all measures of

¹ V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Reminiscences About Lenin*, Moscow, 1965, p. 410 (in Russian).

² P. A. Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution, 1789-1793*, *op. cit.*, pp. 581-82.

³ N. K. Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 74 (in Russian).

the war communism policy, without which it would have been impossible to survive in the conditions of famine, dislocation and war.

In 1919 and 1920 he addressed Lenin on several occasions, expressing his negative attitude to the repressive measures of the authorities, criticising the insufficient independence of the Soviets, and calling for the development of a mass cooperative movement.

Thus, in December 1920, when the newspapers published the Soviet government's decision to take some members of the counter-revolutionary groups hostage after several attempts upon the life of Soviet leaders, Kropotkin wrote to Lenin: "Can it be true that none of you could tell his comrades and convince them that such measures are a return to the worst time of the Middle Ages and religious wars?..."

"I hope nobody will tell me that the people in power do not live happily either... Nowadays even some kings look upon a possible attempt upon their lives as a 'specific of their job'.

"And revolutionaries — as Louise Michel has done — defend in court the people who attempted upon their lives. Or these people are not persecuted, as it was done by Malatesta and Volterina De Clair.

"Even kings and priests have renounced such barbaric methods of self-defence as taking someone hostage. So how can the advocates of a new life and builders of new society resort to such a way of defending themselves from their enemies?"¹

In March that year, describing to Lenin the heavy economic and legal conditions of people living in the provinces, Kropotkin wrote: "Local development by local forces is most necessary. But nowhere does it take place. Instead, now and again people who did not know real life make the worst mistakes, and the price which has to be paid for that is thousands of lost lives and the ruin of whole districts.

"...Without the participation of local forces, without development from below, by the peasants and workers themselves, a new life cannot be built. It seemed

¹ *Zvezda*, Leningrad, 1930, No. 6, pp. 193-94.

that precisely such development from below should be conducted by the Soviets. But the inrush of, and the rule by, the people of the "party", that is, primarily the new-fangled communists (those with firm ideological principles are in the central parts) have already destroyed the influence and the advancing force of this institution — the Soviets — which had been so promising. ...In order to emerge from the present dislocation Russia has to turn to the local forces which, as I see it, can become a factor of building a new life. ... And the sooner the need for such an outcome is realised the better."¹

Kropotkin addressed Lenin directly after they had a personal meeting, on Lenin's initiative, in the flat of Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich in May 1919.

During that meeting they discussed cooperation, power in the centre and in the provinces, and direct revolutionary actions by the popular masses. Kropotkin observed that the local authorities in the provinces were degenerating into bureaucratic officials.

"'We are against bureaucrats always and everywhere,' Lenin replied, 'we are against bureaucrats and bureaucracy ... but you understand well, Petr Alexeyevich, that people are hard to change; that, as Marx said, the hardest, the most impregnable fortress is the human mind! We are taking all different measures to achieve success in this struggle, and our experience, too, makes us learn a lot. Our lack of culture, our illiteracy and our backwardness, of course, make themselves felt everywhere, and no one can ascribe to us as a party, as state power, what is being done wrongly in the bodies of this power, especially deep in the country, far away from the centres.'

"'But this does not make it easier, of course, for those who are subjected to the effect of this unenlightened power,' exclaimed Kropotkin, 'which in itself is the greatest poison for each of those who assumes this power.'

"'We know very well,' Lenin replied, 'that we have made, and will make, very many mistakes... We preferred to make mistakes but to do our work. We want to,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

and will do this work despite all mistakes and lead our socialist revolution to the ultimate and inescapable victorious end. And you help us, by telling us what you know about all wrongdoings, and may be sure that each of us will regard them most attentively.”¹

Lenin regarded Kropotkin with great respect. According to Bonch-Bruyevich, Lenin, “though he was terribly busy, always inquired about the life and work of Petr Alexeyevich Kropotkin, answered all his letters either personally or through third persons, and heeded his every proposal and every objection.”² Lenin believed that Kropotkin wrote “wonderful books ... and felt and thought in a fresh and young way”.³

In February 1919 Lenin suggested that Kropotkin publish four volumes (with an edition of 60,000 copies), which would include his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, *The Fields, Factories and Workshops*, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, and *The Great French Revolution*. The latter was valued by Lenin most of all.

Kropotkin, for his part, regarded Lenin with exceeding interest and profound respect. Bonch-Bruyevich wrote that Kropotkin had once said to him: “I have heard that Lenin has written a wonderful book about the state, which I have not read, and have not even seen, and in which he makes a forecast that the state and state power will ultimately die out. This is immense progress of Marxist thought. No social democrat has ventured until now to draw this interesting and definite conclusion, though, of course, ... if one studies conscientiously works by Marx and Engels, ... one can and should arrive at this conclusion. But the followers of Marx, especially Germans, have always thoroughly concealed the revolutionary essence of his theory, confining themselves merely to the laws of the economic development of society, but in practice remaining in most moderate parliamentary struggle. For this bold explanation of Marx’s theory Lenin deserves the deepest respect, and the world proletariat will never

¹ *Zvezda*, Leningrad, 1930, No. 6, pp. 190, 191.

² V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, “To the Memory of Petr Kropotkin”, *Krasnaya Niva*, 1931, No. 5, p. 19.

³ V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Reminiscences About Lenin*, p. 415.

forget what he has done. I see the October Revolution as an attempt to develop the previous February Revolution to its logical consummation with transition to communism and federalism.”¹

A British delegation of the Labour Party and the trade unions arrived in Russia in May 1920. Among other cities it visited Dmitrov to see Kropotkin. He handed to the delegates his message to the workers and progressive sections of the Western public.

“First of all, the working men of the civilised world and their friends in the other classes ought to induce their Governments entirely to abandon the idea of armed intervention in the affairs of Russia — whether open or disguised, whether military or in the shape of subventions to different nations.

“Russia is now living through a Revolution of the same depth and the same importance as the British nation underwent in 1639-1648, and France in 1789-1794; and every nation should refuse to play the shameful part that Great Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia played during the French Revolution.

“Moreover, it must be kept in view that the Russian Revolution — while it is trying to build up a society where the whole produce of the joint efforts of Labour, technical skill, and the scientific knowledge should go entirely to the Commonwealth itself — is not a mere accident in the struggle of Parties. It is something that has been prepared by nearly a century of Communist and Socialist propaganda, since the times of Robert Owen, St. Simon and Fourier...

“...the Revolution has already introduced into our everyday life new conceptions about the rights of Labour, its true position in Society, and the duties of every citizen, which have come to stay.

“...it is high time that the West-European nations entered into direct relations with the Russian nation. And in this direction you — the working classes and the advanced portions of all nations — ought to have your say.”²

¹ *Zvezda*, 1930, No. 4, p. 188.

² *British Labour Delegation to Russia, 1920. Report*, Trades Union Congress, London, n. d., pp. 89, 90.

During his last years, in Dmitrov, Kropotkin did not change his active attitude to all events in the life of society; nor did he slow down his work. He completed the first part of *Ethics* and began the second one, but his health was getting ever worse. He wrote to Y. N. Polovtseva on 30 December 1920: "My heart is growing bad. I go for a walk, but there are days when I stop after I make 100, 50, or even 20 steps... Sometimes I feel unpleasant pressure in my chest...!"

"Happy New Year!"¹

Two weeks later he was in bed with pneumonia. In the morning on 19 January 1921, his serious illness became known to Bonch-Bruyevich. He immediately informed Lenin about that. Lenin ordered that a group of doctors be taken to Dmitrov in a special train. Bonch-Bruyevich went with them.

The doctors said his state was dangerous for him, but they noted that he was thinking very clearly.

He said to Bonch-Bruyevich at parting: "Take courage in your struggle. I wish you complete victory, but never forget justice and generosity, and don't be vindictive: the proletariat is above that..."²

He died on 8 February 1921.

On 10 February, the coffin with his body was carried to Moscow in a special train. Crowds with red and black banners were waiting at the Savyolovsky Railway Station in Moscow. From there the coffin was brought to the Hall of Columns in the House of Trade Unions, where for two days hundreds of delegations of Moscow factories and offices, thousands upon thousands of people came to part with Kropotkin. His friends and anarchists stood guard in his honour. Some of the anarchists had been released from prison (having given their word of honour that they would come back there) to attend the funerals of the man whom they considered their leader.

The funerals took place on 13 February. The procession walked along Moscow streets, singing revolutionary songs and marches. It stopped in front of the house of Lev Tolstoy and the chorus sang "Eternal

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 210 (in Russian).

² V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-19.

Memory" several times. At the Novodevichy Cemetery a funeral meeting was held. Among the speakers were delegates of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow City Council, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the Executive Committee of the Third International, and also delegates from Russian, American, Swedish, Norwegian and other anarchists, from the Tolstoyans, from the united Narodnik (Populist) movement, and many others. Among the numerous wreaths laid on Kropotkin's grave two were from the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People's Commissars. The inscription on the former said, "To a man most persecuted by tsarism and international bourgeois counter-revolution"; and on the latter, "To P. A. Kropotkin, a veteran of the struggle against tsarism and the bourgeoisie."

The obituary published in the newspaper *Pravda* said that in the person of Kropotkin, "as in the person of Bakunin, the history of Russian public adjoins the history of revolutionary movements in the West". As it mentioned the special position occupied by Kropotkin both in the West and in Russia, the obituary stressed the peaceful character of his anarcho-communism, and said that "propaganda by action" was alien to him.¹

Articles on Kropotkin's life and revolutionary struggle were published also in provincial papers. One of them, the *Sovetskaya Sibir* (Soviet Siberia), published an article by Ivan Maisky. "One of the brightest men of the 19th century is no more. And, standing beside the open grave of the old revolutionary, we, his ideological adversaries, involuntarily uncover our heads, because, for all his delusions and mistakes, Kropotkin always remained, to his last days, a brave soldier in the war for the emancipation of mankind from political and social tyranny."²

¹ N. M. Pirumova, *op. cit.*, p. 216 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*

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